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THE
DRAWING-ROOM TROUBLES
OF
MOODY ROBINSON, ESQUIRE.



"THE SHY YOUNG MAN."—Page 136.

COELEBS THE YOUNGER
IN SEARCH OF A WIFE
OR
THE DRAWINGROOM TROUBLES
OF MOODY ROBINSON ESQUIRE

ILLUSTRATED BY

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P R E F A C E.

OF course, the graver portion of the public will, on reading the title of this work, immediately it pass over as some frivolous attempt to amuse, unworthy of manly thought, or the higher elements of imagination. A "drawing-room trouble," they imagine, must be an insignificant distress, or, at the best, feminine in its character; forgetting that a little trouble may be a great nuisance, and therefore worthy of consideration. Absent shirt-buttons have caused more conjugal disagreement than even unfaithful flirtation itself; and how many sweet matches have been spoiled by the merest trifles, the miscarriage of a letter, or those wonderful and feminine mysteries called "misunderstandings." One would be more likely to pass an uneasy night by having a parched pea in his bed than by having the responsibility of empire on his mind. It was an invisible insect that ate up the Irishman's potato, carried, as a consequence, the Incumbent Estates' Act, and revolutionized Ireland. It is by drawing-room troubles, in fact, that the happiness of the refined portion of English society is guided. A man can only be ruined once or twice in his life, but he may have a cold dinner every day of the week; and so drawing-room troubles, by their frequency, are as important as all things that come in swarms. Their importance, too, is exaggerated by the position in which they are placed. Even the mighty golden

eagle forms but a speck in a wide-spread landscape, whereas a caged canary in a boudoir is an important element of the chamber's ornamentation, and occupies a seat in the mind. So men who would calmly view your death in the field of battle, will sincerely regret treading on your toes in the drawing-room. The flower that is trifling in the forest is gorgeous in an earthen pot.

Drawing-room troubles also assert their importance, because we do not expect to find trouble in the abode of peace. It is vexatious to a man retiring from the toils of life to find himself surrounded by the mosquitoes of polite existence biting him in his tenderest affections.

It is in the drawing-room, too, that taste is cultivated, and refined education displayed. Think of the drawing-room troubles of those rough diamonds who have risen in society by their own merits;—catching galling “aitches,” forming secret plans to get rid of their hands, and struggling not to eat with their knives. These men would have given their fame not to have gone through the “troubles” hitherto despised by the poet as a subject for illustration.

In the drawing-room is ambition gratified, and love rendered successful or unhappy. What is the receipt of a sword of honour, or the gift of the freedom of a city in a golden snuff-box, compared to going down to dinner before a person who snubbed you in early life; or to what purpose have you toiled at the bar, or sweltered in Indian campaigns, if you are to be preceded by a fat banker, because he is a baronet and you only a knight. The poet, carped at by his publisher, and torn to pieces by critics, seeks consolation in the laurels

that have been woven for him by the admiring nymphs of the drawing-room. But it is in matters of love principally that drawing-room troubles arise, as the following pages will exemplify. Here the smallest trifles turn the current of the affections.

Emily B., for example, makes an appointment with young Inner Temple, at a fashionable concert. Temple has been detained by a long consultation, arrives late, and cannot get up the crowded stairs. At length, when he does so, he is wedged in between two stout serjeants-at-law. He sees Emily far off, sitting next to his rival, J. of the Guards. He sees the fond but capricious girl look anxiously around for him. He sees her; she cannot see him. He sees her grow pale, then indignant. J. is pressing his suit, and no doubt calumniating Inner Temple. At last an opening occurs, and the late lover rushes towards her. Alas! it is too late, Emily, indignant and neglected, has accepted J. while Temple was crossing the room.

Similar was the fate of my very tall friend Sir Stately Pole, the most precise and dignified man in London. He loved a very diminutive but elegant girl, who, on the night Sir Stately wished to offer to her, sat on a very low prie-dieu chair. The little lady sat anxious but expectant; to-morrow she was to go to Rome with her mother. Sir Stately knew it; and she knew that if he did not offer that evening he never would. Sir Stately was obliged to bend very low to whisper his passion: at the critical moment the unhappy man felt his braces crack with the tension. He inadvertently stood up: had he retained his position, all

had gone well, but when he stood he felt the commencing descent of his pantaloons. In another moment, like the first streak of dawn, would appear a white mark beneath his waistcoat. Retirement was necessary; Sir Stately performed it with grace, and felt not the despairing heart beneath the smiling face of his love. The opportunity was lost: the lady went to Rome, and a year afterwards became Marchesa Favolanti.

But many illustrations of these trials are given in the following pages. The author knows of no poet who has previously systematically attacked the subject. The "Rape of the Lock" is an isolated instance in the poetry of Pope. Some examples occur in Beppo and Don Juan; but Byron felt too deeply for this species of poetic philosophy. Lord Brougham put forward his "Political Philosophy" as a feeler on an untouched topic. This author acts similarly, but has an advantage over Lord Brougham. His Lordship, unhappily, had too much genius, and unintentionally exhausted the subject; has consequently no followers, and so failed to found a school. The same accident, it is satisfactory to think, is not likely to happen to the author by coming before the public in this work. He undoubtedly discovered a new field of poetic philosophy; but whether it is for his weak hands to raise it into a system, he must leave to the public to decide.

The Fatal Inexpressibles.

THE FATAL INEXPRESSIBLES.

Not e'en the proverb of the many slips
That part the beaker from the ready lips,
Can mark in full the crowd of shining bubbles,
Inflate with hope, that end in D. R. Troubles

The slightest words the fondest hearts divide,
As hairs split canes, or pebbles turn the tide.

Spread the broad table with the banquet's weight,
Light your *salons*, and lay ope your gate,
Greet the glad guests with proud contented smile,
Then serve the feast—but no, we wait awhile,
There's one not come; my lord—lost comfort blight him!—
Has cost two years' manœuv'ring to invite him.
Cold grows the dinner, but colder still the party,
Who whisper just complaints, polite, but hearty.
A note arrives, with news most sinister—
His lordship is commanded to attend the minister;
Or should his lordship come—so far, no fault.
The cook has boiled the fish without the salt;
And soon your pride to lower deeps is sunk;
The champagne's iceless, and the butler drunk.

How oft, between the offer and the day
The best plann'd matches fade in air away !
Perchance you've won, in town, a belle, who proves
A perfect Amazon in country groves ;
Though loving talent, goodness, honour, pride,
Would think you no one if you could not ride.
You visit at her father's house in Wales ;
Though soon your joyous heart within you fails,
When seen the furious beast you're ask'd to back
(Your only practice on an old town hack).
He walks at first, then trots, then bolts—and whether
Losing your loved companion or your leather
Troubles you most, 'tis certain, when you're blown,
You'll find your carcase and your hopes o'erthrown.

One more example, told of a loving pair.
The youth was clever, and the lady fair ;
The latter pure, as her skin was white,
But prone t' imagine unintended slight ;
He quick when roused to utter words too bold,
But quicker to repent them, ere his anger cold.
They form'd a well-matched twain, and but for fate
Might now be happy in life's holiest state.
Once at a ball, as fled the merry hour,
They fell discussing of their marriage tour :
One was for France, the other Scotland praised,
Whilst both—objections—both their accents raised ;
At length, in one of his ill-fated speeches,
He blurted out, “ You wish to wear the breeches ;
Before the wedding-day, is sure too soon
To don the hymeneal pantaloen.”
The lady rose, and, bowing, left his side,
Her colour heightened with her wounded pride ;

Nor let she flow the quickly-coming tears,
Till with mamma, and out of sight down stairs.
He, in the mode offended men complain,
To supper went, and drank too much champagne.
When morning brought a sober recollection,
It brought, alas ! some anxious, sad reflection :
Oft did he mutter, " Now, depend upon it "
(In vulgar phrase), " this time I've been and done it."
Just as he thought this quarrel must be killin' her,
His servant brought a parcel from a milliner,
Which, folded out, display'd a rich brocade,
In the last fashion of gay Paris made—
Made at *his* order, to fit the pretty person
Of his late lost one, Emily M'Pherson.
" The very thing," he cried, " to join us two ;
I'll send this present, with a billet-doux,
Just to assure her of my constant heart ;
No more shall hasty words our fortunes part.
Here, John, *this* note and parcel you must take
To the M'Phersons ; that to Mr Slake,
And mind, the pair of trousers in the last
Old Slake must change, their style is old and past
An answer to the note you must await,
And mind return, sir, in a sober state."
The note thus ran :—" My Emmy, you are right,
I was to blame in vexing you last night ;
Accept the present, of which my man's the bearer,
And may it, love, adorn its gentle wearer."
No messenger than John could scarce be quicker,
Save when he got himself (too oft) in liquor ;
On this occasion Johnny got so fuzzled—
" Which parcel for the lady ? " John was puzzled.

“The lady’s this, the tailor’s is the long one.”
So fatal John unhaply left the wrong one.

Need I describe how, when the note was read,
Her smiling face with happy blushes spread ;
Or when the gift was seen, another tale
That face related, now so deadly pale,
The firm-shut mouth—the firmer clenched hand
That grasp’d the heaving breast beyond command ;
The burning eye, from which no tear could start,
For tears rush’d backwards on the stricken heart,
And all the signs, that do too clearly prove
The pride that’s struggling with a shatter’d love.
A *moment* bent, she stood erect, and then
Slowly re-closed the parcel, took a pen,
Wrote a short note, and bade her maid deliver
Both to the sot, who’d crush’d her hopes for ever :
Nor need I tell the fury and surprise
Of the young lover, when they met his eyes.
He scarcely stands, at length he madly screeches,
“Great saints above ! he’s left my love the *breeches*.”

* * * * *

They met no more, though ev’ry effort made he
To get an explanation from the lady :
She married soon, to save a second *trousseau* ;
And, to conclude, I thought her wise to do so.

Sentimental Moody.



SENTIMENTAL MOODY.

EACH man his trouble as his taste decides ;
His choice of gladness—that of bother guides
Not in the gen’ral, but the special plan
Of joys that mark the individual man.
All love their daughters—love the boy that thrives—
Most their parents—*some*, I’m told, their wives ;
And so to all some common troubles fall :
But now of those beyond the common thrall.

The sprightly lawyer finds his keenest grief
Not in a failure, but a feeless brief ;
That patient most his doctor pain will give,
Who ’spite the laws of med’cine dares to live ;
The dainty gourmand makes his most ado
O’er ill-baked *pâtés* and a spoilt *ragoût* ;
And so the buck in silent sadness grieves
O’er ill-made breeches and o’er shapeless sleeves ;
And, last, the sentimental Moody smiles
O’er artless woman and her beauteous wiles,
And finds this earth assume the gloom of Hades,
Whene’er he’s disappointed in the ladies.

*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

Fresh from college, with a fresh complexion,
A slender purse, a rather good connection,

An upright form, a pair of pleasant eyes,
Two rows of teeth, he deem'd himself a prize—
Fastidious rather, as he thought his chances
Depended only on his own advances.
His wife should be a mould of form and beauty,
Combining all things—talent, temper, beauty;
As girl romantic, as a woman steady,
Ripe in ideas, in conversation ready;
With unaffected manners—warm, not hearty;
Must walk like Nisbet, polka like Rosati;
Be delicate as tulle, not slip her aitches—
Not Coutts's gold could pardon such a *laches*;
For Moody would be frozen in a trice,
Should sea-born Venus ask him for a *hice*.

Once at this time, when past the usual season
(When no one stops in town who has no reason),
His mother took him to a country hop
("Not," as he coarsely said, "the upper chop")—
A town-ball in the fields, not far from Wembly;
Or, as she said, "a rather mix'd assembly."
Need I describe how crowded up the stairs
People of standing—from the want of chairs;
The ancient flirts who danced, the young who wouldn't;
The men who tried to dance although they could'nt;
The stumpy beauties, and the lanky beaux
(Like puppets from the fantoccini shows);
The want of light; the benches low and mean;
The rushing waltz; the wreck of crinoline;
The melting glances; still more melting ices;
The freezing looks of mothers; the devices
Of old-young belles; the smirking chaperone,
Who marches down to supper all alone;

The chilly tea, concocted by the maid ;
The footman serving boiling lemonade ;
The boy in buttons, rescued from the stables,
Stumbling o'er dancers, rolling under tables ;
The heat, the draughts, the bustle, rollick—all
The genteel pleasures of a country ball.

Moody reflected—"That's a beauteous head ;
How rich the curls o'er either shoulder spread !"
All hasty judgments meet with just rebukes—
The locks were one of Truefit's best perukes.
Another figure caught his wandering eye ;
The waist was taper, and the form was high
(Sure nought but youth could mould so proud a grace).
The lady turn'd—with *fifty* in her face !

But now his mother brought a *fere*—a catch
(Anxious her darling son with wealth to match).
"No nonsense, Moody, and your fortune's made ;
Her father's quite a Croesus, though in trade."

"Oh, what a pretty girl!—Commercial Venus,
From all our prejudice of birth now wean us !"
'Twas not the Dian' form, the features fair,
Nor the round bust, the shoulders' graceful bend,
The rich o'erflowing of her raven hair,
Nor the small hands, that in the dance extend,
That touch'd the Moody heart ; but in her eyes
Some kindred sentimental feelings rise,
Silent, yet speaking—in their thoughtful ray
You found, yet found not, all they meant to say.

How to address her?—Sure no vulgar theme,
 Or common talk, must mar so fair a dream.
 The stage, th' opera season, e'en Mont Blanc
 (*Sic* in Cockaigne), were olden grown, and rank;
 Then he recall'd (that very day the date)
 A horticultural Inner Circle fête.

"Had she been there?" The soft response was "No."
 The down-bent eyes, the cheek's endamask'd glow,
 The pretty accents of that silver tone,
 Were quite enough to break ten hearts alone.

"Fond of flowers?" "Yes"—"those in her hand."
 "Fond of gard'ning?" She did not understand.

Ah! now he felt just in his proper latitude,
 And spake as follows—in poetic attitude:—
 "The garden's nurture is a lady's toil;
 'Tis more her fertile taste than fertile soil
 That bids the leaves unfold, the flowers blow
 With changing bloom, the colour'd parterre glow—
 Nature's embroidery; various tints, combined
 By plann'd provisions of a graceful mind,
 Give health to heart, more pleasure to the soul
 Than working others' thoughts in Berlin wool.
 How sweet to watch, when days are bright and fair,
 The petals op'ning to the bracing air!
 Or, when the rain descends, the vernal showers
 Refresh the stamens of thy fav'rite flowers!
 Or when the autumn heralds summer's death ——"
 He would have gone on, but now stopp'd—for breath;
 While she, with quiet scorn (oh, Moody, pard'n her!),
 Smiling, replied, "*We keeps a reg'lar gard'ner!*"

"*Oh!*" he rejoin'd (I can't describe his tone).

"Yes!—Ah!—Of course!—Oh, here's your chaperone!"

* * * * *

"Oh, Moody, lad—there's a good fellow! do
Escort some girl to supper—that in blue."

The lady thus intrusted to his care
Was very plain in face, though very fair,
With deep-blue eyes, and high, expansive brow,
And something *piquante* in her very bow;
She had a smile that show'd a love of teasing,
And yet, withal, 'twas something very pleasing;
The little well-form'd figure knew a grace
So full of life, you soon forgot the face;
But when she spoke, remarks however slight,
'Twas like a startling change from dark to light:
The face grew lovely—every line revealing
The choicest beauties of poetic feeling.

Moody was charm'd. Although he thought it duty
Never to fall in love—except with beauty—
His young companion (young—she might be twenty)
Seem'd fond of supper, various and plenty;
She proved her sex can pleasant things combine;
Though sweet and feminine, she liked her wine.
They ate, and drank, and laugh'd, and linger'd yet,
Regardless of the rules of etiquette—
Mot upon *mot*, a little more champagne;
Another *mot*, and then they laugh'd again,
Till Moody feels his swelling heart extend
Right through his shoulder, to his finger's end.

He 'gan to count how much he had to offer,
Or could he reckon on maternal coffer—
Saying aside, " I vow upon my life,
No other girl but this shall be my wife ;
This is my first, my real, my manhood's love."
His thought she answered—drawing off—her glove.
Why does he tremble? Dazzled ! what is this?
The golden circlet of connubial bliss !
She took his arm, and ask'd to go up stairs,
And as they went, gave up her flirting airs—
Saying, " My husband's here—at least he may be ;
I must go home, for sake of *dear* baby."
The husband soon was found—a sternish human,
Whose looks express'd—" I'll thank you for that woman."

Moody reflects—" Was ever such another
Hapless young man, who wants to please his mother?
I've done my best, yet everything's miscarried ;
The first one was a fool, the second married."
He fled the ball-room, with a smother'd groan,
And left his mother to go home alone.

She found him pacing up and down the hall,
With slippers on, his dressing-gown o'er all,
His head enveloped in a bright bandanna,
Seeking for comfort in a mild Havannah.

The Widow of Ems.

THE WIDOW OF EMS.

I LIKE to start a tale with grave reflections,

The more so when the story is a comic one
(We all approve respectable connections),

The reason is a gastronomic one—
We eat our mutton first, and pastry after ;
So heavy business should precede the laughter.

Thus to begin :—" We less or more are slaves
Of habits early taught, and young impressions
(All save those lib'ral-minded men, the knaves,
Who deem their escapades are not transgressions,
But mere exceptions that assist the rule,
And manly triumphs o'er a bigot school).

These habits and impressions oft are wrong,
Though well enough when in their proper season ;
When in the way, their impulse is too strong,
And in a moment break the use of reason ;
So be you all from prejudice seceders :
There—quite enough reflection for *my* readers."

Decidedly, the truth of this position

Was proved with Moody, who, agreeable, clever,
And wishing to escape a bachelor's condition,

Spent half his time (with strenuous endeavour)
In laudable and constant searches for a wife,
Yet still was tenant of a single life.

Moody, from early years, had sworn devotion

(As do all proper men) unto the fair,
And yet was shackled with the strangest notion,
That to no female ought he give a care,
Nor ought he be with her one day contented,
Unless she had *all* virtues e'er invented.

Accomplishments especially—as, viz.,

Painting and music, *crochet*, poetry, reading,
Dancing, walking, riding, quiet quiz,
And ev'ry other point of female breeding;
Whate'er her personal or mental dower,
No lady wanting these had him in power.

Hence this caprice of Moody's so extended

Tow'rds ev'ry lovely votary of fashion,
That all his best well-wishers were offended,
And scrupled not to lay the friendly lash on
(All lashings now are friendly, e'en in Kansas),
When seeking answers to the following stanzas.

“Does she sing well, and play on the piano?

Were her teachers Anderson or Bochsa?

Speaks she Français, Deutsch, Italiano?

Or learnt she water-colours from old Cox, or

Copley Fielding? I hope no scruples fetter her!
From polk, or waltz, etcetera, etcetera."

In fact, so far were those inquiries carried,
And their development notorious,
That, spite his well-known efforts to be married,
E'en girls of "certain ages" grew censorious,
Truly asserting (when they ceased to tease him)
They found it very difficult to please him.

One summer, disappointed and chagrin'd
With one or two good chances he'd undone,
And feeling from his countrywomen wean'd,
He fled the offended demoiselles of London;
With lower'd spirits, frowns, and mutter'd *dems*,
He took his trunk and *ennui* off to Ems.

The lively bustle of the *table d'hôte*,
Join'd to the change of manners, forms, and faces,
Revived his keenness for his old pursuit,
Restored his relish for the female graces;
With Moody's taste so vastly too fastidious,
Could he but find the German graces hideous?

He found it very difficult to pardon
The curious *gout* of eating prunes with meat,
Discover'd by a pretty girl from Baden—
And shoulders high, and hands the size of feet—
Was vex'd with beauty, choosing *sauer krout*
To all the pretty things he talk'd about.

Another blue-eyed, interesting Saxon
Provoked him, by unnatural devices
Of cutlets after fruit, and taking snacks on
Bavarian beer, to wash down water ices ;
In short, as far as *frauleins* were concern'd,
There seem'd at Ems no glory to be earn'd.

By chance he met a continental crony,
One of those men you always meet abroad—
When sick of all—wines, waters, macaroni—
A man you'd cut at home, although, when bored
With isolation, deem his face propitious,
Although you know him vulgar and officious.

This baron (such are always counts or barons),
Pitying poor Moody, said he'd introduce
The youth to one of Nassau's choicest fair ones ;
Although, regarding marriage, 'twas no use—
The lady had foresworn it, why ? a mystery.
Whatever was the cause, this was her history :—

Pledged to a husband, at an early age,
Whose *tenderness* was equal to her own,
Saving the difference—his the final stage
Of years and gout, whilst hers was youth alone.
Yet was he not a husband wives disparage—
He died so very shortly after marriage.

He left his widow all he yet had spared
From youthful revelry, or gout, its brother.
No doubt she mourn'd him ; often she declared
She never should discover such another—

(Because she didn't look). Her youth and station
Had made her quite the theme of conversation.

When the good baron found that M. required
An introduction to the lady, he declined
To be a party to the danger he desired ;
Nor, till with Moody he had often dined—
Sold him three genuine(?) Rubens and a Watteau—
Did he consent to drive him to her chateau.

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Moody, accustom'd, in his native land,
To see the fairest female forms created,
Was cold to face, to form, to foot, and hand,
Of ev'ry beauty and expression sated,
Yet sudden felt a glow, an inspiration—
'Twas less than love, but more than admiration.

The lady's whole contour, her charming grace,
Denoted youth and softness ; dark-brown hair
Tastefully cluster'd round an oval face
Of most transparent whiteness ; and a pair
Of eyes, of deepest hazel, on the victim
Turn'd, with a penetrating glance that nickt him.

The lines and bendings of her form the while
Appear'd as round as sculptor could desire,
With something quite unusual in her style—
An outward coldness 'neath an inward fire
Melting—sadness yielding to hilarity—
Gave to her charms the zest of singularity.

The fair reclined upon an ottoman,
Beneath a canopy of lace, and silk, and muslin,
Surrounded by a luxury that not a man
But (meaning "wed") would deem a little puzzling.
She moved not as they came, but, strange to say,
Retain'd her lounging posture all the day.

A lively conversation then ensued,
On science, literature, and history;
With which the widow seem'd so deep imbued,
That to her guests it really was a mystery
How she had learnt so much, without the mocking
Pedantic affectation of the "stocking."

Brought up at home, her "finish" was in France;
She'd seen the North, Italia's sunny land;
She knew these countries' manners and romance,
And spoke their language with complete command.
At length had Moody found one to his notion,
And gave her, mentally, complete devotion.

An incidental notice of the beauty
Of the surrounding scenery of Nassau
Led them to painting—topic where it's duty
For everybody, dilettanti, ass, or
Critic, or snob, to have a biting tusk in,
After the manner of Millais-making Ruskin.

'Tis painful asking ladies if they paint,
Because the question has a double sense;
Or natural bloom, or tendency to faint,
May give response, without conceal'd pretence.

But Moody ask'd it : but upon her part,
The lady pleaded ignorance of art.

Unreasonably long as was this meeting,
Moody did not permit it to conclude
Without the lady's granting the repeating,
And only parted when to stay were rude ;
Nor did he fail to let the fere discover
Himself three parts, if not the whole, her lover.

A day pass'd o'er—another sunny noon
Saw Moody posting tow'rds the chateau's gate—
A rather early visit—perhaps too soon.
He didn't take the baron—Moody couldn't wait :
He thinks " the conversation best alone ;"
At least the baron " don't improve its tone."

He found the lady on her couch reclined,
In attitude of ease, with ev'ry grace
Of silken robes—it almost seem'd design'd.
But doubt was banish'd, when beheld the face—
The smiles so sweet, her voice so charm'd to win,
To doubt its nature, was itself to sin.

Its tones were clear, then soft, like wind-borne chimes ;
Her talk was full of wit, of sense, of news,
More sparkling than the leaders in the " Times,"
And quite as harmless as the old reviews.
One only discord in her soul-revealings
Made clangour in his harmony of feelings.

Her voice suggested music in her soul :

“ Might he inquire the instrument she play’d ’n ?
Was hers the German or Italian school ?

Weber, Mozart, Mendelssohn, or Haydn ?
What was her fav’rite duet ? Would she sing ?
He knew her voice would suit his by the ring.”

With slightly heighten’d colour, gleaming eyes,

He look’d expectant admiration—

A look that scarcely vanish’d in surprise,

As she responded (to his consternation),
With a soft laugh she vainly tried to smother,
“ I know no note of music from another.”

Moody was silenced ; yet hope is so divine.

Slowly he clomb again his fancy’s heaven.

“ What though she wants *two* muses of the nine,

She’s quite perfection with the other seven—
Paintings are bought, and music can be hired ;
Her very want of them’s to be admired.”

He soon departed, and the widow’s looks

Encouraged him to press her lovely hand ;
And then there follow’d—just as in the books,
Such scenes are oft described—you understand ?
So o’er that parting we a veil will drop,
Save that our friend the next day meant to pop.

To-morrow slowly came—the counted hours
Pass’d as the months that usher in the flowers.

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It's difficult to start a conversation,
When 'tis of such a delicate complexion,
To give no clue to your investigation,
And yet retain sufficient of connection
To keep the point in hand, yet so to screen it,
To slip it out as if you did not mean it.

The smallest trifles often start the theme.

It was so here : the lady still reclined,
Languid and pale, as if a troubled dream
Had stirred the waters of her peaceful mind.
Her face was thoughtful, and her beauteous eyes
Gave serious meaning to her soft replies.

The conversation flagg'd. By chance the sound
Of an itinerant clarionet was heard,
Playing outside the house a favourite round.
Whether the air suggested what occur'd,
Or Madame's pretty feet, erst out of sight,
But now quite shyly peeping into light,

We know not, save that our hero cried,
" Oh, what a joyous air ! ah, what a sight,
When graceful women in the polka glide !
You dance of course—devoted, am I right ?"
The lady downward casts her lovely eyes,
And, pale as marble, dropping tears, replies :—

" I did so once, but now, alas, can not."
Moody became all tenderness, romance—
Drew near the couch—propriety forgot—
Bent o'er his lovely friend as in a trance,

To hear her tale of sorrows—quite transported
To be so blest, before so often thwarted.

“Listen, my friend,” she said, “my *dear* friend ”
(He bow’d and blush’d—his blushes almost burn’d),
“I fear that our acquaintance will now end.

Three years ago my carriage was o’erturn’d ;
Much hurt, I suffer’d—it’s o’er, why need I talk ?
You see I *have* two legs—but *one is cork !*”

Then follow’d silence—’twas an awful pause !

The lady downcast—Moody almost stupid,
Like the garotted, ere they know the cause.

“A cork leg ! a cork leg !—by lovely Cupid !”
He scream’d aloud, then darted from the chateau,
Almost insane—I’m told, without his hat, oh !

Moody's Friend ; or, The Inadvertent Man.

MOODY'S FRIEND ; OR, THE INADVERTENT MAN.

PART I.

SOME men are like bad watches—false Genevas,
Sold by the Jews to dupes as “patent levers,”
Bejewell'd in five holes, the cases strong,
With only this small drawback—always wrong.
No doubt the things are watches—that we know ;
And yet, with all perfection, never go ;
The proper wheels are group'd within the ring ;
The balance trembles on its fairy spring ;
The fusee turns obedient to the power ;
They've all the qualities of watches, save the hour.
But where's the fault ? You can't detect the sin.
But know the article's a great “take in.”

I do not mean such men are knaves, or fools—
Guileless as lambs, and prizemen in the schools ;
They stand peculiar in their various stations—
The pride, the promise, sorrow, of relations.
Save but for something, that we can't find out,
They all would climb the ladder, not a doubt ;
And yet they all, on unexpected grounds,
When half-way up, slip down between the rounds.
They might be statesmen, but are too ideal.
Then why not poets ?—just an ounce too real.

The law would suit them, p'raps ;—for that unfitted,
The knaves they prosecute are e'er acquitted ;
Some tiny hitch—unconscious dereliction,
Turns their defences into sure conviction.
As priests, enthusiastic, earnest, clever,
From hot to hotter water plunge they ever ;
Against them all united—save in opinions—
Whether they're Jews, Dissenters, Mormons, or Socinians.

And like the sage who, prophesying London
Would by the Thames be swallow'd up and undone,
Was disappointed in the visitation—
A cypher wanting in the calculation,
Which made (besides the hubbub and the fears)
The trifling diff'rence of a hundred years—
These men, when in the very worst of mess,
Are always just a cypher from success.
I call them "inadvertent men"—a class
That dull utility writes down as "ass ;"
Or praise they merit ; or deserve abusing ;—
Not mine to ask—I seek for the amusing.

And such a man had Moody 'mongst his friends,
Whose inadvertence brought him troubled ends.
This gentleman was learned, clever, witty,
Polish'd in manners, yet—the more the pity—
An inadvertent man—from want of tact—
From impulse, haste—ignoring every fact
Of past and future ; so his daily life
Was, 'twixt his acts and intents, constant strife.
His means were slender, yet enough to spare
Much for enjoyment, with a proper care ;

He boasted of economy,—'twas such
That might be perfect, save it cost too much—
He squander'd guineas, when for shillings craving,
And spent a fortune in the art of saving ;
His conversation lively, but not happy,
He brought unfitting topics on the *tapis* ;
Was there one present with a part unsound,
His aimless talk was sure to probe the wound ;
When sharply answer'd, placed on the defensive,
His smiling pardons made it more offensive.

He'd talk of politics to some fair girl,
And soon would set her brains into a whirl ;
Ask her opinion—get it—calmly thank her—
Then chat on failures to a shaky banker ;
On late divorces with a recent bride ;
Then with a duchess on the sins of pride ;
To nervous dames he'd often talk of arson ;
Tell naughty stories to a serious parson.
Was there a youth his parents' hearts distressing,
He'd ask the mother, " Was her son progressing ?"
Or to a girl whom love in secret gnaw'd,
He'd scandalize the man her soul adored,
Nor note the grief of which he'd sown the seeds.
He'd ask a widow, just escaped her weeds,
" My lady, how's Sir John ?" She hangs her head ;
Some friend would pull him back—" You fool, he's dead !
Really, I wonder ! 'Pon my soul it's cruel !
Do you not know, she lost him in a duel ?"
Though thus perverse, as if pursued by fate,
He yet was pleasant in a *tête-à-tête*.

When ask'd to dinner, always went astray,
Forgot the number of the house, or lost his way ;
Though striving to be punctual, always late ;
And oft mistook the hour—oft the date ;
Or erst in time, whilst ranging round the covers,
He'd take his place between a pair of lovers.

We all have friends, whate'er may be their railings,
That find some virtues shelter'd by our failings.
As flow'rets blow 'neath winter-wither'd heather,
The growth that hides, protecting from the weather,
So those that know, however dark the whole,
Seek 'neath our worn-out faults the flow'rets of the soul.
Still more when good is hidden from the eye
Only by inadvertent faults, or by
Those careless acts that make more bitter foes
Even than wrongs, that raise undoubted woes,
Do friends befriend us—not so much as lovers,
As proud to know what no one else discovers :
It comforts much to think the world is blind
To see a gem that they alone can find.

And so this gentleman had warm defenders—
Self-constituted, too—his manners' menders ;
An inconvenience always found a-hid in
The zeal of those who take your part unbidden ;
So that you ask, " Is't best without defender
To face your foes, or to your friends surrender ?"

The gentleman in hand had noble traits
Hid from the world by inconsiderate ways,

That gain'd him praise from those that knew their springs,
At the small price to him—of leading-strings.
So when they found his best intents miscarried,
They secret counsel took to get him married.
And urged that dose for every moral ill
Of fools, or rakes—the matrimonial pill.
I know not why it is—the ladies ever
Advise this course for those not good or clever ;
As if they thought that man gets right the faster,
By having one of them to swell disaster.

Amongst these earnest friends existed one
Whose friendship took a very eager tone ;
No doubt he wish'd his crony settled, cosy,
As he proposed his sister for the *spose*—
His only sister, unaffected, meek
(Was that the cause his tea was always weak ?),
So fond of him, attentive to her duties
(That made her fear his seeing other beauties) ;
So thoughtful for his health—in that so good
(She served his dinner of the plainest food) ;
Her constant guard, too, on his moral state
(She watch'd to chide him when he came home late) ;
Dreading his social buoyant spirit, she
Took special keeping of the cellar-key.
Could she do more ?—yet so much care she took,
She once proposed to keep his banker's book.
Yet, strange to say, this loving circumspection
Oft met ingratitude, and oft rejection.
Her brother's friends, besides, were almost rude—
Some whisper'd “*passé*,” others mutter'd “*prude*.”

Of course some faults she had, with such perfection,
Yet these were balanced in their nice connection :
A little apt on others' faults to harp,
Yet, though her speech was blunt, her temper sharp ;
'Tis true her mouth was large—but small her eye ;
Her form was low—but then her nose was high ;
And yet her brother offer'd Ned fair Anna
In quite the most disinterested manner.
Good soul ! at once to get (his own expense)
His sister wed, his friend a better sense.
The matter was arranged—the youth was willing,
And quite prepared for courting, cooing, billing ;
Humbly submissive, as his best friends press'd it,
He yet had hope some error might arrest it.

Now, as the day was old, and evening near,
He was impress'd to join the brother's cheer :
To pass the time, as tow'rd's the house they wended,
The latter thus described the fair intended :—
“ My sister's deeply read—indeed, her blueness
Has rather hurried off her *première jeunesse*.
Perhaps she's shy, of words a little chary ;
Though small in figure—perfect—quite a fairy ;
Capital temper !—unless you try to joke her
'Bout what she doesn't like, or else provoke her ;
I think her plain, but *you* know, always brothers
Differ in that particular from others.
To rule a house (a rather queer grimace
Came with a twinge upon the speaker's face),
Why, no one can, if sister Anna can't :
In fact, she's just the kind of wife you want.



"Who's this?" she cried, with rage; "Who brought him here?"
The brother meekly sighed, "'Twas I, my dear."

I'll trust her with you—but, unless *you* choose her,
 P-e-r-h-a-p-s, poor thing, I shouldn't care to lose her.
 His mouth said that—his left half-closed peeper
 Seem'd to express, 'I shouldn't care to keep her.' ”

So on they trotted to the brother's dwelling :
 The future bridegroom felt a kind of swelling
 Rise in his throat, and in his chest a banging,
 Such as is felt, 'tis said, before a hanging.
 The pair arrived—the summons made—the oak
 Yields to their entrance ; then the brother spoke—
 “ Pray seek that room awhile, just up the flight,
 While I seek Anna, and make things all right.”

It was the drawing-room. The eve was near,
 And deep the twilight, though the sky was clear.
 Down by the hearth he saw a figure sitting—
 A female figure, by the fire, knitting—
 “ A little girl,” he thought—“ fair Anna's sister ”—
And so he drew her on his knee, and kiss'd her.
 The figure struggled from the stolen salute ;
 A shrill voice scream'd, “ What's this ? Unhand me, brute ! ”
 “ A woman's voice, by Jove ! ”—a sudden blaze
 Reveal'd a very tiny lady to his gaze—
 Her eyes on fire, the poker by the handle.
 Just then the brother enter'd with a candle ;
 He look'd from one to one in silent wonder :
 The lady spoke the first—in would-be thunder.
 “ Who's this ? ” she cried, with rage ; “ who brought him here ? ”
 The brother meekly sigh'd, “ 'Twas I, my dear.”—
 “ How dare you, sir ?—so rude a man—you calf.”—
 “ Why, Anna, love, it was on your behalf.”—

“On my behalf, and I not once consulted?
This is indeed to be by both insulted.”
So, with an angry, full-sized woman air,
The tiny form swept proudly past the pair.

The friends stood quite aghast, in mute *tableau*,
Like persons in a play, who, when the throe
Of grief or fun attains a crisis fit,
Rest in a group for plaudits from the pit.
When they had stood awhile, with strange grimaces,
They took their breath, and also natural faces;
Then follow'd question and reply, producing
Some laughter at this mode of introducing.
“Cheer up, my boy,” the brother said; “for Anna,
For what I know, may rather like the manner.
At least, I’m sure she will excuse the error.”—
“Oh! don’t—oh! pray,” the other cried, with terror;
“My chance is fled—’twere insult to address her.
Spare me, indeed, I could no more distress her.”
“I fear,” the other said, “she does not please.”—
“Oh, charming!—pleasant.” But again at ease—
“Her very thingumbobs, you know, all that
Would stop my being.” He put on his hat,
Oped the room-door, down the staircase prances,
And fled as fast as all his better chances;
Nor did the brother deem himself then able
To cheer his system at the fam’ly table;
And so, with sadden’d looks, the timid sinner
In fear slipp’d out, and went to club to dinner.

THE INADVERTENT MAN.

PART II.

THE Inadvertent Man was one of those
Whose worst disasters hold a happy close ;
His strange mistakes, in all their various shapes,
The sequel show'd to be but near escapes,
As if dame Nature, when she made him *gauche*,
Had left good-luck to guard him from reproach.
The troubled "ends" and blunders that he grew in,
And left him sound, would prove another's ruin ;
His fate was like those sea-weeds, whose frail forms
Are but more finely fashion'd by the storms ;
Or plants unwished—uncared for—set aside,
By some strange fortune grow the garden's pride,
Whilst those rear'd up in prudence and delight,
Fade like the woodbine, 'neath the dews of night ;
Or like those scenes we undergo in dreams,
When hurl'd from lofty cliffs, 'midst prayers and screams,
To fall through space, all horror, sick with dread,
And wake to find we've tumbled into bed :
And thus we saw his very last reverse,
Though it brought no better luck—it saved him worse.

But still, his friends were anxious he should wed ;
They thought how little guides aright the head,

When the man's heart is right ; how much affection
Can give an erring judgment right direction.

They knew a lady with a nest of nieces,
Who all were pretty, some with golden fleeces,
All at that age—girls weary of their brothers,
And 'gin to wish, somehow, " they were another's."
One was each season fitted out for London,
With a strong hint, her duty would be undone,
If she regain'd the mansion patrimonial,
Without her prospects being matrimonial !
So more than one, who waited " till the last"
For something " best," when time was nearly past,
Accepted quick, as if she were a glutton, for
A man she really didn't care a button for ;
Fearing, indeed, the stern, paternal frown,
If disengaged she dared to quit the town.
You'll say these marriages were ill assorted : '
One had his choice, although the wife was thwarted.
Then women bend so to the mast they're triced to,
It scarcely seems to matter who they're spliced to.
It's different with a man ; unless he takes
The proper one, his life is all mistakes ;
His wife may wind about him more and more,
And yet, like ivy, rot him at the core ;
May loving yield, without provoking him,
The parasite may yet be choking him.

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This aunt had made much sacrifice for nieces,
Not that their coming her expense increases :
When she invited—if taken at her word—
She (fairly) ask'd some trifle for their board ;

But then, good thing, her house was rather small,
And so she gave up her companion—all
Her comforts—to clear out in the gallery
For the sweet comer (whom she paid no salary);
She look'd so to their morals and their duty,
Taught them obedience, and the use of beauty;
Not to be lazy—her wants to look about—
To keep their tempers when her own was out—
To be good correspondents—write her letters—
And be attentive to their aunts and betters.
Wishing to form them for their future lives
As humble spinsters, or as pattern wives,
So could these girls with any proper grace
Decline to fill the lost companion's place?
Some did it well, but some quite faded got;
But all ('tis true), e'en those that wedded not,
The first time that they came (d'ye guess the reason?),
Ne'er seem'd to wish a second London season.

This good aunt gave up comforts; the late hours
Her nieces kept, much tried her waning powers:
'Twas all for nieces; good old chaperone,
She never had an invitation, when alone;
I'm glad, poor thing, to say she had rewards,
She sometimes made a pocketful—at cards;
The ball-rooms were so hot, to save her bloom,
She spent the ev'ning in the supper-room;
Late in the ev'ning, oft her ancient flushes
Were far more rosy than her nieces' blushes.
Perhaps you'll think it wasn't quite her part
Not to keep more watch on niece's heart:
She'd grinning say, "Well, now-a-days, the bye,
A girl can scent a fortune more than I."

And chose they ill or well, to her the same :
If well, she got the credit—ill, the blame
Was somehow cast upon the hapless bride,
Who could not choose for aunt and self beside.

This good aunt gave up comforts ; the young men,
Oft calling—lounging—teased her now and then
(’Tis true, they presents gave the maids and pages,
That were accounted in the dole of wages) :
For then her niece was happy in love’s passages,
When much required in some domestic messages.

Then on her fell (when all was fix’d) beside
The choosing of the outfit for the bride ;
For her fair nieces—merely country elves—
Were quite incapable to choose themselves.
I’ve heard it said, I’m sure she would do so,
She took a good commission on the *trousseau*.

’Twas trying, too, instead of getting hearty
At the seaside, to join a wedding party
Down in the provinces, when retired rest
Would suit the health, a season’s toil oppress.
Poor thing ! when to a wedding she went down,
She thought it best to close her house in town ;
And could these married nieces offer less
Than welcome to the cause of their success ?
Besides, she loved these nieces (and their houses,
A passion undervalued by their spouses).

The niece-in-waiting, when was plann’d this match,
Was said to be a beauty, and a catch.

We will pass o'er the trite old-world manoeuvres
By which the pair became, first friends, then lovers.

She was the kind of woman that a youth
Of intellect would readily admire :
Fair face that smiled a woman's native truth,
Fine eyes that shone with more than common fire,
Secretly rich in laughter, and those glances
That set the heart of man eccentric dances.

Her fair-limn'd fancy open'd like a fan,
Not ever fully spread before the view,
But set us longing, with its half-seen plan,
To see the finish'd picture fresh and new ;
Then disappointing closed, then open'd wide,
To show the graver yet the richer side.

Nought but field flowers were presented there—
Not the bright blossoms that the hothouse yields,
But such wild beauties as poetic care
Would gather from the freedom of the fields ;
Such buds as children pluck without offence,
But loveliest bloom with full-grown innocence.

The lady so had smiled, so blush'd, and all,
The swain intended his true love to proffer,
But Inadvertence with intruding call
Again, and yet again, delay'd the offer.
Oft, when at home, she had a morning waited,
He let his watch go wrong, and so belated,
He went in time to see her park-wards driven,
Not in a humour quite prepared for heaven.

So, when in polkas they would happy glide,
His eyes met hers, he nothing saw beside,
And hers would laugh—their sparkles quite divine.
Then was the moment for the wish'd design—
The dance, the music were so many heart'ners;
When thump! they met another pair of partners.
She'd stop, and thank him in an undertone,
In well-feign'd dudgeon, seek her chaperone.

Again, when after dinner they were met,
The piano open, and the music set—
This pair would find themselves (nor why! could guess)
Apart from all, enjoying silent chess,
Or in the farthest room, 'midst jokes and hints,
Seated together o'er a book of prints.
Not that their conversation enter'd into
The topics of the "line" or mezzotinto,
But something else; and as that doth suggest
This was the moment that they might be blest,
She'd hear the painful sound, that sure announces
His foot was rending off her lower flounces.
Much as she loved, she couldn't bear the shock
Of feeling slowly torn her best silk frock.
His lips had form'd the words—as in distress,
She softly said, "I think you're on my dress."
With such a bashful man that was enough
To send him off confused—if not in huff.

And thus when walking, after some light chaffering,
To lead her gently to the fate he's offering,
He'd inadvertently (with much doubt tossing)
Begin to pop the question on a crossing.

What startles him? A voice exclaims, "You cove 'ere
Can't you move on, sir, or you'll get runn'd over."
The chance is lost—they run—she in alarm
Leans all her weight upon his arm.
It form'd occasion for much blush and laughter,
But spoil'd the serious business he was after.

And thus 'twas ever (his *gaucherie* the cause),
Between his lip and hers was still a gauze,
Until she saw (such things do oft occur)
The opportunity must come from her;
And so she managed he should make a call
When aunt was shopping, far away from all.
Such was his fear and joy, when *tête-à-tête*
He found himself with her, his mental state
Scarce left him in a suitable condition
To end with grace the object of his mission;
They talk'd and talk'd, time was flying fast.
She sigh'd in thought, "I fear again 'tis past."
She changed seats to the sofa, took her knitting:
"Go in and win, was ever time more fitting?"
Thus mutter'd he unto himself aside;
And as he felt "all-overish," he tried
To be at ease: examined well the room,
The chairs, the tables, and the fender-broom,
He closely look'd at all, as if near-sighted,
And with the carpet's colours seem'd delighted,
She mutter'd to herself, almost annoy'd,
"Is this the way his time should be employ'd?"
When suddenly he placed beneath her nose
A bouquet, gather'd from her fav'rite rose.

She never smelt before so sweet a posy,
'Twas healthy scent, it made her cheeks quite rosy ;
She smelt again, he standing, and she sitting,
At last she quite forgot about her knitting,
And ev'ry time he gave the perfumed dose
He nearer drew to her ; at last, when close
(The rosy flowers her rosier blushes hide),
He plump'd him down quite natural at her side,
Dropping the glowing blossom in her dress,
His franchised hand her snowy fingers press ;
Whilst hers begin to knit, as if the purse
Were some fell destiny or fatal curse.
His other hand, nervous with joy and hope,
Play'd with the tassel of the silken rope
Attach'd to the *sonnette* ; while far away
His discourse stroll'd from what he meant to say ;
And yet 'twas strange, how quickly by a turn
He came to that, that made her cheeks to burn.
Her hand retreated, yet it seem'd to cling ;
He softly whispered ——

“ Please, ma'am, did you ring ? ”

They started far apart, with all confusion ;
'Twas household Buttons that had made intrusion.
And then the baffled man, with grief and ire,
Perceived his inadvertent hand had pull'd the wire.
“ No,” said the lady—“ Yes ; is aunt within ? ”
“ No, ma'am, she hain't ; ” and exit with a grin.

Such situations, with issues so obstructed,
Cannot be mended, must be reconstructed ;
So difficult to build in all regards,
They rise as fragile as a house of cards ;

So the young lady, with a modest bearing,
Left her poor friend despairing pardon—swearing.

He had not long been chafing in this flurry,
Before a lady's-maid came in, in hurry,
To see if missus' parasol was there.
It could not be so, was completely clear.
"Where was the lady?" asked he.—

"Going out,
To walk the gardens of the square about."
"What a neat hint," he thought, for yet unfound
The parasol remain'd, though sought around.

Giving her time to gain her walking ground,
He sought the leafy square, with heart on bound,
And soon he gain'd the place, and found that he
Had quite forgot that needful thing the key,
While from without he saw her walking round,
Like a fair palfrey in a parish pound.
Pshaw! 'twas not much for youth unailing
Quickly to mount the surly iron railing;
With ease and speed he gain'd the bristling top,
When a deep voice call'd out, "You, sir, you, stop!"
The keeper of the square had grasp'd his foot,
In struggling to be free, he lost a boot.
Just then *she* came in sight; in heat of blood
His hold gave way, he tumbled in the mud.
He rose in rage, to fall so 'fore her eyes,
But the stout keeper wouldn't quit his prize.
The youth explain'd; the keeper call'd it chaffing;
The youth beheld his lady-love was laughing,

Though not unkindly, but without control,
Though half conceal'd, with all her heart and soul.
The sign was good, and yet again was gone
Another chance, and he was still forlorn.

We quickly pass the rest (besides the shilling
That made the keeper humble, ready, willing),
To view the next event, his last invention,
T' apprise the gentle girl of his intention.
This was to write, and so he wrote next day,
In manly tone, the all he had to say.
The letter was to post to Berkeley Square,
Alas ! the latter word was wanting there ;
And so to Berkeley was it duly sent,
But not exactly to the person meant.
He long impatient waited for reply,
None came, and yet he hoped ; yet with a sigh
His reason said her silence meant refusal,
But still his thoughts were constant re-perusal
Of all the happy past. She on her part
Question'd the cause of absence in her heart ;
So, with their loving intercourse disjointed,
Both longing parties sigh'd on, disappointed.

THE INADVERTENT MAN.

PART III.

THE "Inadvertent Man" shall claim another sheet,
To show how well he tumbled on his feet.

One morn from weary restlessness he rose,
To find two letters on his breakfast table ;
On viewing one, his very heartstrings froze,
Nor to believe his error was he able.
It was inscribed " Dead letter." With a groan,
He read that " None such is at Berk'ley known."

Here was the mystery, and its proper meaning.
Good heavens ! all this weary length of time,
That had with so much pain been intervening,
He had been proud, disdainful, quite sublime,
Calling his love " coquette"—a flirt—a snare—
And she unconscious of the whole affair.

Fool that he was—it left him room for hope.
He cast his eyes upon the envelope ;
Oh ! anger, indignation—there he found
His hapless note had gone an ample round.
All the young maids round Berk'ley's ancient hold,
Of names like hers, had with the note been bold ;

With various answers was the letter cross'd,
Or with critiques and sentiments endorsed.
Some criticised his style, and some his means ;
Ask'd if towards a cottage love he leans ;
Or, was the lady modest, or a beauty ;
What were his notions of a woman's duty ?
Some thought the note too warm—the lady wrong
If she accepted. One, more frank and strong,
Wrote thus : “ You're just the kind of man I'd like to choose,
And I am willing, should your love refuse.”
No wonder, with some bitterness and ire,
He threw his love-epistle in the fire !

The other missive was a perfumed note
(Neatly directed in a lady's hand—
A hand he ought to know—he didn't know't),
Came through the fingers that he would command.
It invitation was to view a private play
In the aunt's house, and thus run on to say—

“ My dear sir, I've lately lent my house
To an old friend, who's writ a pretty farce ;
I hope you will your olden friendship rouse,
For of young beaux our audience will be sparse ;
Your lengthen'd absence puts me in despair—
Even my niece is wondering where you are.

“ Emmy, indeed, will take the lady's part—
The walking lady—heroine, I suppose ;
We wish'd your aid in histrionic art,
To be my niece's lover, but now we've chose

(Not finding you) another, who's consented
To act to her—it couldn't be prevented.

"Only last night, we tried a dress rehearsal,
The lovers look'd most charming—quite a match—
And warbled duets from the works of Pearsal
In such delicious style—we hope to catch
Double encores—to make the play go fairly.
We shall be very crowded—pray, come early."

The young man tore the note in bits asunder ;
Here was an issue to his foolish blunder.
Not only did he now good chances miss
Of being the actor of his future bliss ;
But worse his luck, another had his part
To play the lover—p'raps with all his heart ;
What right had she—yes, after what we know—
To look so charming with another beau ?
"Quite a match"—what kind of match, begad !
"Singing duets"—I think I shall go mad ;
My Emmy thus, I think my brain will burst ;
At any rate, I'll have my breakfast first.
The breakfast brought the "Times,"—and then a smoke,
Which calm'd him down to think it quite a joke,
Such fun to have a rival—really jolly
To know it was his own consummate folly.

We'll leave his fancies to their own devices,
And hurry forward to this story's crisis.

* * * *

The theatre was domestic, by the making
The larger of two drawing-rooms a hall

For the kind audience (who were almost baking)
As pit and boxes, gallery and stall.
The rear saloon was hidden from the gaze
By a green curtain of the Thespian baize.

The author was a lady—silent sitting
Close to the glare thrown by the lower lights,
Trying to smile (her brows unconscious knitting),
As if quite careless of her fame's delights;
The fame to come, for nothing well could harm her
The audience too polite to damn the drama.

Around her group'd her nearest, dearest friends,
All complimenting, very much surprised
To think she had such gifts—a thought that tends
To hint of her—they couldn't be surmised :
The more they praised, the more they seem'd to say
“ We thought you were a fool until to-day.”

The play was written as a melo-drama ;
Part in farce, and partly sentimental.
Something about the daughter of a farmer,
Who loved, of course, a man without a rental.
The farmer stopp'd (of course) his daughter's marriage
Until the rentless man could keep a carriage.

This was the plot.—Then in the op'ning scenes
The comedy of low life was presented ;
Not as she wrote it—but by other means
Her sons, who acted, had themselves invented :
Their speeches' heads and cues they learn'd perforce,
But fill'd the spaces with their own discourse.

Now their dramatic parent had been proud,
When bringing low-life on to this pure stage,
To make it quite genteel, and said aloud,
“The comic parts could hurt no sex or age.”
Her humbler *dramatis personæ* were a bevy
Of proper fools, indeed, and dull and heavy.

Well may you guess the lady's pale dismay,
To hear the mighty alterations in her play;
Her proper scenes become a long harangue
Of broadest fun, fat jokes, and common slang;
As if on purpose, too, no little swearing:
They not one twopence for the author caring.
The audience laugh'd at first, and then around
A proper gravity was gaining ground.
Not that the jokes themselves were bad—but then
They were too colour'd for a lady's pen.
To the poor author soon it did occur,
This dialogue was all ascribed to her.
Then she felt faint—but quickly found her speech,
And turn'd defensive round from each to each,
With, “Oh! Sir John, believe me, that's not mine;”
Or, “Oh! my lord, I never wrote that line.”
Her dear friends all around with doubtful smile
Received this strong assurance—she the while
Bitterly crying—“Oh! you shameful boys”
(She almost damn'd her drama with her noise).
“Peter! to put such jokes upon your mother!”
But Peter only answer'd with another.
Thus it went on, until it was not certain
Whether the farce was 'fore or 'hind the curtain.
The play could have no doubt about success,
If half as comic as its authoress.

After the comic came the lover scenes,
Presented in a mass of evergreens,
Hastily placed as arbour garniture ;
And strangely mingled with domestic furniture,
Which, with some pots of flowers, made a bower
Supposed to be the place for Love's sweet hour.

The "Inadvertent Man," with panting ears,
Gazes from off the hindmost row of chairs,
Restless to see how his unquestion'd dear
Will bear herself towards her cavalier.
At last she comes, and treads towards the light,
Tastefully dressed—a very pretty sight.
She sings a little song—and speaks her part ;
Now she stands list'ning—then a graceful start.
"He comes!" she cries—"he's coming to my heart!"
She smiles a glorious smile—and then her charms
Are close enfolded in the hero's arms.
"The d—l!" bursts a voice from out the crowd.
"Hush! hush!" the audience cry, as now aloud
The lovers speak, and slow unwind the plot.
A man behind the chairs feels very hot—
Then cold—and then a novel kind of pain,
As hero clasps the heroine again.

Just then a lady very fond of chatter
Teased the poor fuming lover with her clatter.
Saying to him, "How prettily they do it!"
Then would be archly added, "If you knew it,
It's very true to nature." Tossing his head,
"A deuced deal too true," he fiercely said.
The lady turned offended ; left alone,
He 'gan to mutter in an undertone,

“ True to nature ; yes, no doubt attracting.
I know that shallow puppy isn’t acting ;
To pull his nose I deem my special mission ;
He takes a mean advantage of position.
I wonder she allows it. Modest Emmy !
I really couldn’t think it—not I, demmy ;
By Jove, she’s clasping *him* ! Good lack ! so zealous.
Ah ! well, it doesn’t matter : I’m not jealous ;
And *that* as well—I cannot stomach this.”

The last remark was call’d up by a kiss,
A sounding kiss, with loud decided crack ;
No stage deceit, a most undoubted smack.
The shock’d spectator madly took to flight,
And sought the nearest chamber with a light.
It proved to be the supper-room, where merry
Were some few spirits, swilling port and sherry.
He loathed the sight of supper ; but, alas !
Sharp mis’ry offers oft the dang’rous glass.
He drank the copious draught, until his brain
Was mad with jealous thought and iced champagne.

The play was ended soon, he fled the crowd,
Who now descended tow’rds him, laughing loud,
And sought elsewhere to cool his heated rage,
He found himself on what had been the stage ;
There coolly sat, looking most happy, gay,
The gallant spark who’d stolen his love away.
“ Aha !” the other thought ; “ I must not drub him ;
At least not here—at any rate I’ll snub him.
You acted well.”

He watch'd the other raise
His eyes to say,
 " I thank you for your praise,"
But with the manner of a haughty she,
When she would say, " How dare you speak to me ?"
But nothing daunted, our friend proceeded :
" You did some things a little more than needed."
The other still was quiet.

 " For example,
I thought your bold embraces more than ample."
The other strangely stared.

 " Not to intrude,
I thought your manner to her very rude.
No gentleman, I say, of good condition
Would take such mean advantage of position."
The other look'd confounded, and his eyes,
Hazel and large, grew almost double size.
He bit his lips, as if to cage a smile,
And mutter'd, " Who'd have thought it ?" all the while.
At last the smile broke loose—a moment after,
Burst from his mouth a peal of ringing laughter.
His rival stamp'd, and bawl'd amidst the pealings,
" How dare you, sir, so hurt another's feelings ?
Give me your card, we cannot quarrel here."
The other gasp'd and smother'd, cried, " Oh dear !"
And panting said, " Oh, pardon, I'll explain !"
But then his laughter rose again, again.

Just then, young Emmy enter'd to the room,
Bright in her beauty and her ball costume ;
And as she came, the laughing cavalier
Whisper'd some secret in the fair one's ear.



"Sir, that gentleman is a lady."

Whate'er it was, she answer'd with a "Hush."
It made her laugh, but also made her blush.
This was too much for flesh and blood to stand.
"Madam," the wrong'd one said, "I can command
My feelings in your presence ; you away,
I fear my righteous indignation would not stay

"From some strong act—it could not well be blamed—"
He had gone on, but Emmy, now afraid he
Would do some violence, in haste exclaim'd,
"Edward, be calm—*this gentleman's a lady.*
The play-bills could have shown you, in a moment,
This character enacted by Miss Beaumont."

Edward stood bound, with open mouth and eyes,
A very portraiture of great surprise—
Breath quick and hard ; at length recovered, cool,
He softly mutter'd, "Well, I *am* a fool."

A single glance convinced him of the truth
As to the sex belonging to the youth ;
Though largely form'd, and "more than common tall,"
The points were woman's—she possess'd them all.
The mincing walk was there, the arms were thrust
To suit the mark'd enlargement of the bust.

And then she forward came, and archly said,
"Your conduct to poor Emmy was ill-bred,
A moment to suppose her not correct.
Know, sir, it wholly rose from your neglect.

For you away, to act, our pet declined,
With aught but something of the female kind.
Then lots we drew—to me it fell by lot
To take your part,—*and don't*—*you know what.*

“ My pardon take for praising my *humanity* ;”
Then with a little *piquante* touch of vanity,
She smiling said, “ I'll go exchange my dress,
Or p'raps some other doves I may distress.
So now adieu ; indeed, it's time to go,
For whether man or woman, I'm *de trop.*”

The lovers, left together, were not long
In making that all right, so often wrong.
For now the ice was so completely broken,
Not much was left between them to be spoken.
But still the lady thought it only right,
Now to resent the blunders of the night,
Or really vex'd, or with it in her mind
To make the explanation still more kind.

Those who know women, surely tell,
That if a woman loves you passing well,
You've ne'er a better chance of her good graces,
Than when she's vex'd, and pulling pouting faces ;
And so the “ Inadvertent Man ” succeeded
In raising smiles, and saying what was needed.
It was but nat'ral, when so near the close,
This happy couple should adopt a *pose* ;
And so they form'd a group, nor was it curious ;
It was a like arrangement made him furious,

When jealous-blind, love-sick, and stupid,
He thought his Psyche loved another Cupid.

Their platform was the stage behind the baize,
Where one small taper gave a doubtful blaze,
That shone sufficient for their young delight;
Nor quell'd the lady's blushes in its light.
While thus engroup'd, still, breathless, happy there,
They were astonish'd by a sudden glare.
They started up; before they knew the cause,
Their tableau was acknowledged with applause
From the whole party, who, to their dismay,
The curtain raised, were viewing this new play.
I need not say the pair took headlong flight,
Nor beau nor belle again appear'd that night.

The trickster is unknown, though some have said it,
That fast Miss Beaumont ought to have the credit
Of bringing back the guests; at least, 'tis certain
She had a hand in pulling up the curtain.
The guests declared, that, when at feast down-stairs,
They were advised to seek their former chairs,
As *tableaux vivants* were about to show,
Though not, they thought, with such a living glow.

Of course, it needs one meeting yet again
To place all straight between the thwarted twain.
Then suddenly the gallant found his marriage
Had all along been founded on miscarriage.
When introduced to Emmy, he'd been told
Her beauty was but equal to her gold.

But now he learnt (his strange mishaps to crown)
The heiress-niece had never come to town.
Her name was Emmy, too, so rose the error.
This was a blow, because he felt a terror
Her father might refuse consent, on learning
His income small, his fortune yet an-earning
Not so at all; for, now he'd caught her,
He found his Emily a thirteenth daughter.
With her he found his all—a happy life,
Nor want of fortune in a prudent wife.

Woody's First Offer.



MOODY'S FIRST OFFER.

THE Season over, and the Houses risen,
All London rushes from its brick-built prison,
To seek the hôtels of romantic Rhine,
Or the gay streets of Paris, the divine ;
And some to re-enact in country places
The genteel comedy of London graces.

So Moody, like the rest of all the world
Bethought it time to take a little change,
To seek some country place, where life unfurl'd
Its roll of future days—without the strange
Unnatural scheme of wasting life and leisure,
In London tongue denominated “pleasure.”

Now Moody, like all bachelor young men
With decent ways and decent expectations,
Was always welcome in a country glen,
Where Highland Maries languish'd for flirtations.
One invitation from a farmer,
Who plough'd in land his gains from ploughing ocean,
Caught Moody's eye, as being all the warmer,
Because there were two daughters on promotion.
So off he started to regain his might,
By the fresh light of country fields and scenes ;

By using day as day, and night as night,
By all the health a country visit means;
But most he hoped to freshen up his mind
By leaving London feelings far behind.

It was not likely, in these country places,
That he would meet with anything resembling
Town's trite manœuvres, or the smiling faces
That smile for fashion, or to hide dissembling.

At least, the ladies he's about to meet,
Untutor'd creatures in the ways of art,
However warm their natures, must but greet
Him with a natural smile, and modest heart.
And not, the moment that they meet, contrive
The "how" to make him flirt—perhaps to wive.

He met a welcome in this chateau-farm,
Hearty and boisterous from the ancient mariner,
And kindly from the girls, without th' alarm
He thought he should create on his appearing there.
In fact, he felt aggrieved as they refused
To meet him shyly—or to be confused.

So Moody 'gan to fear his country belles
Were but another species of the genus,
Only the daughters, with a change of spells,
Of our respectable and British Venus.

* * * *

The younger, very young, and very pretty
(And in a quiet way, *piquante* and witty),
Possess'd, without attracting observation,
A tempting mode of practising flirtation.

Her *tête-à-tête* with any one alone
Was archly utter'd in an under-tone.
With shrouded eyes, and lips for ever smiling,
A laugh half-hush'd, or, what was more beguiling
Than all her pretty points (though all adorn her),
A cosy trick of crushing in a corner.
And thus, with half a smile she made more way
Than her loud-talking sister in a day.

The elder girl (we deem it very dirty
To tell a lady's age, we'll call it thirty)—
The elder girl was quite a different party :
Jovial, good-natured, boisterous, and hearty.
Though large in figure, rather high in feature,
With too much red, she was a handsome creature.
The hunting cubs around agreed that "Bella"
"Was an uncommon jolly, stunning feller."
She hunted, fish'd, and shot besides ;—of course
No girl around, like her, could back a horse.
And so she fish'd for lovers, not with flies,
But tried to hook them with her tongue and eyes.
Crimean hero-like, her fame resounds
For desperate engagements and her wounds ;
Like him (although defeated in a catch),
In no *engagement* had she met her *match*.
Some half-a-dozen previous had miscarried,
Which made her *very* anxious to be married ;
And as she found attentions not so paid
As those that in her former days were made
(Perhaps indeed to save the age from falling),
She made attentions of her own, her calling.

She open'd like a battle—with a skirmish
Of bottomless disputes, and rather warmish,
With feign'd attacks, and never with conclusions,
Except in flirtish, personal allusions.
Back'd with a dropping fire of killing smiles,
Of archest looks, and most artistic wiles;
And when she felt prepared by such transactions,
Charged with a whole battalion of attractions.
A most decisive charge, it must be said :
She gain'd the day, because the foemen fled.

Moody was sadly disappointed. Here
Was London out of town—with all its passions,
With all their lines, exaggerated—queer,
Like a coat cut from out a book of fashions.
Or, like a wretched daub from some old master,
Or marble palace built in lath and plaster.

Besides, 'twas hard, when he had come for peace,
Only to live a short time quite unguarded
To find his vigilance must never cease,
Unless to "Bella" he would be awarded.
Ever to resist, and that in all directions,
These constant forays on his best affections.

To take to Minnie was a great relief,
'Twas like smooth water after Dover Straits ;
Or like contentment after teasing grief,
Or gentle slumber after Christmas waits.
And Minnie knew it well—and so design'd
That while her sister storm'd, she undermined.

And so the siege went on, until he seeks
 To study nature in fair Minnie's face :
 The sunset glow was in her rosy cheeks ;
 The wave of waters in her easy grace.
 And would he know the colour of the sky,
 He sought the proper hue in Minnie's eye.

And thus our hero, though he quitted town,
 Not for a love-scene, but for verdant swards,
 To breathe the freshness of the breezy down,
 Was soon, unconscious, seeking her regards,
 Playing at eyes, until he felt assured
 The heart of pretty Minnie was secured.

So, step by step, poor Moody was enchanted,
 And found, *again*, the very wife he wanted ;
 Then only waited till a time should proffer
 Completely suitable to make the offer.
 A month pass'd o'er, before the opportunity
 Of time and place were present, both in unity.

* * * *

'Twas evening, on the sloping lawn
 The deep'ning shadows long were drawn,
 While softly the dew-laden breeze
 Sang its night-song through the trees.
 Still longer grow the twilight shades aslant——
 I wish to be poetical, but can't.
 Well ! 'twas the time when footmen light the lamp,
 Nature still visible, but growing damp ;
 When tender ladies from the garden turn,
 And show their graces round the hissing urn.

Our friend and his host in the parlour sat,
In the silence that follows a lively chat,
And Moody began on a plan to muse,
Without offence more wine to refuse.
As thus he sat on the twilight poring,
He suddenly found that his host was snoring.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
That, once gone by, ne'er comes again.
So Moody thought—so Shakspeare taught—
He could offer now—he would—he ought;
Could he only meet with his own sweet gipsy
(When her father was fix'd—and slightly tipsy).
So he pass'd from the house to the sunlit green,
And gazed around on the lovely scene.

Whilst thus he gazed, he saw from where he stood
A form in female drapery near the wood.
One of the sisters? Which? was now the doubt,
For both of equal stature were about,
And, distant, much alike—except in that
They wore a diff'rent colour in the hat.
The yellow “Bella” wore—and Minnie blue;
The form he saw had graced the latter hue.
'Twas Minnie, then—her path towards the vale;
The very time and place for love's young tale.

Slowly advancing—his uncertain foot
Betray'd his presence by a creaking boot;
The form glanced round, but not again look'd back,
As if she knew the spectre on her track.

Her form was shawl'd—the hat was deeply veil'd—
He wish'd to look beneath—his courage fail'd;
But as his breath came quick, in painful tone
Her bosom heav'd responsive to his own;
Forth from the shawl peep'd shy a tender hand,
A sign that broke reserve from all command.
He gently took the gift—the fingers burn'd;
But still he felt his pressure was return'd.
Then they walk'd on, not slowly, but in haste,
And as a guide, his arm enzoned her waist:
He felt that thrill he ne'er might feel again,
Joy strung delirious to the verge of pain—
That first, sole, last unmingled cup of bliss,
When love claims other love, in love's first kiss.

He bent his face—he paused—he could not speak,
So made short struggle for her rosy cheek;
And as he conquer'd, rais'd the veil and kiss'd her
Oh! hapless lover, 'twas the other sister.
Poor Moody started back, aghast, affrighted,
But pertinacious “Bella” looked delighted.
Laying her head on him, she bade him stay;
So, come what might, he scarce could burst away.
An explanation *now* were better, he surmised,
And so he ask'd her, “Was she much surprised?”

“Oh! not at all” (she pouted for a kiss).
“Indeed, my love, I've long expected this.”

Poor Moody's cheek grew pale—but yet he thought,
“She must see what I mean when home it's brought.”

He said "I've made an error—don't you guess?
Of course you understand!" She whisper'd, "Yes;
You think the love you offer rests with you."
She hid her face and sigh'd, "I love you too.
Oh! dearest Moody, don't you think me foolish?"
("Indeed, I do," thought he, "and deuced coolish.")

What should he do?—her head was on his heart,
And, what was worse, his arm was round her waist;
'Twas not the *pose* in which t' explain his part
And all his errors, while they still embraced.
Besides, 'twas clear she thought, in her inventions,
This offer now the crown of his attentions.
Attentions! thus his efforts to repel her
Had cruelly been interpreted by "Bella."

Whilst thus he stood embarrass'd, on his ear
Fell the light trip of female feet—oh! fear.
He tried to loose her arms—oh! more disaster;
Enchanted "Bella" only clung the faster.

"Here's Minnie coming—oh! unloose me, 'Bella.'"
"My own fond sister—do, dear Moody, tell her."

Ere they could start away from each a stride,
Poor cheated Minnie stood the pair beside.
She saw it all—a moment seem'd to stoop—
Then stood erect—then vanish'd from the group.
There's little more to tell: he gave the slip,
For fear of Minnie—and her father's whip.
As for poor "Bella," now her grief's assuaged,
She's proud of being *once* so near engaged.



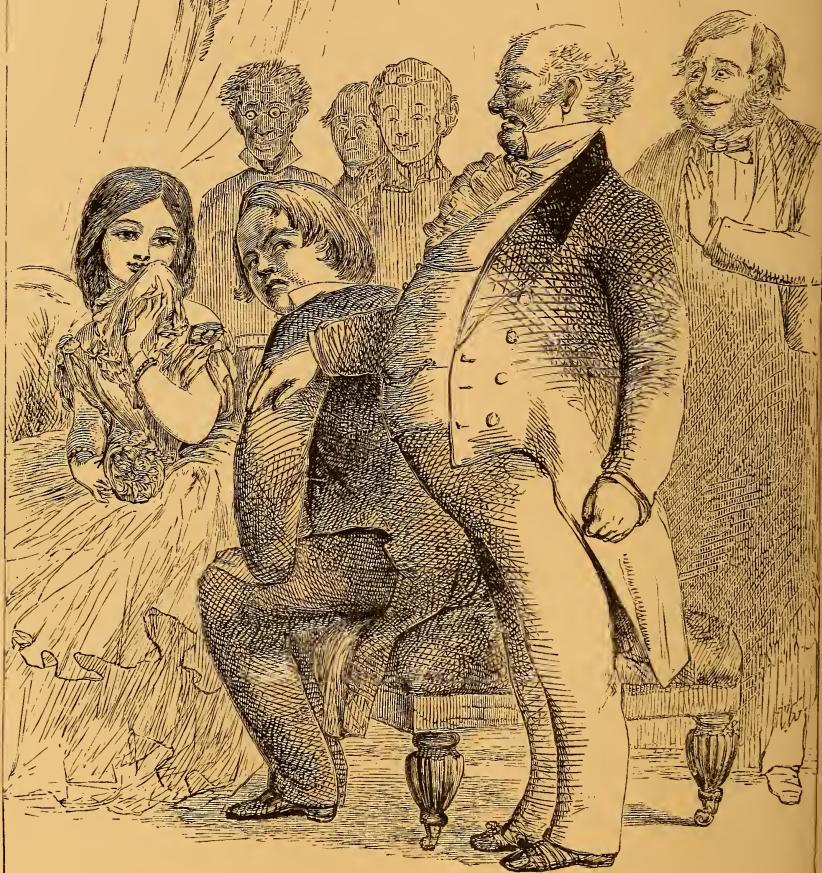
THE CRUEL SISTER.

A Slight Mistake.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

I HAD once an acquaintance (whose unmarried life
No doubt had prepar'd him for taking a wife ;
For when become husbands, the worst single sinners
Make very respectable—givers of dinners),
Who had wedded and settled—a lady from Devon—
In Manchester Square, or, as *he* called it—heaven
(An extravagant term of his honeymoon days ;
I have never *since* heard him make use of the phrase).
Now he ask'd me to dinner, exactly at six ;
With a smile, adding, archly, “ No bachelor tricks ;
Be punctual ; my wife, though a charming sweet creature,
Keeps us all to a minute—her only strong feature.”
So to honour his welcome with bravest of duds,
I donn'd a white satin, and diämond studs.
And arriving, was marshall'd by tall powder'd wights
(What a change from the tiger in neat tops and tights !) ;
Then, ascending, found everything changed and amiss,
And exclaim'd, in vexation, “ The woman's done this.”
Those sweet sporting prints, and those great easy-chairs,
Had been sold or exchanged, or were banish'd down-stairs ;
In their place, there was something, so low in the crown,
That you never got up, if you ever sat down ;
And instead of the grate, where huge coals used to burn,
And a half-frozen mortal was done to a turn,

And those hobs, where the mull of rich claret would simmer,
Was a miniature "patent," all metal and glimmer,
That you could not get near, nor console with the poker,
But was touch'd up behind by invisible stoker.
The old comfort was flown, and, on gazing around,
My glances were met by looks cold and profound,
From two or three persons with city-like faces,
What had studied their tailors much more than their graces.
Oh! where were the lads, with the laugh and the hand,
Who would stand by each other, that is, if they *could* stand?
Where, too, was my host?—he at least had my blessing.
Not dress'd? dared I trust, not receiving a dressing?
But stay—who is this—there, a little apart?
The heiress, his cousin. Alas! my poor heart!
Both pretty and young—though it pleased me the most
To recall an old partner and favourite toast.
"I will speak—if I can with complete self-possession—
For this is the moment to make an impression."
I advanced with a bow, in the confident style
Of a favourite friend. She replied with a smile.
The underbred youths were completely struck dumb,¹
And sat twirling their whiskers with finger and thumb;
Whilst I, with delight at the change of my fate,
In a moment was buried in sweet *tête-à-tête*.
I was lost. Oh! that face! the deep glance of those eyes!
The fair grace of that form! those undoubting replies!
Oh! then visions arose of a conquest and love:
I chatted so well, and she seem'd to approve.
Romance fed my thoughts, and they wider range took—
"At last I've a wife, and my own banker's book."
The thought was p'raps wild, but the change was so simple,
To the *Temple of Hymen*, from rooms in the *Temple*.



"Why this uncalled-for intrusion?"

I might have soar'd higher, but was brought back to earth
By a touch on the arm, and those snobs' stifled mirth.
An elderly man, with a puckering brow,
Wish'd to draw my attention, and made me a bow ;
And accentedly said, " Sir, I have not the pleasure——"
Why should he, indeed ? But I—not the leisure
To follow the rules that conventions enforce ;
So, returning his bow, I resumed my discourse ;
When I heard his harsh voice, to my utter confusion,
Exclaim, " Sir, explain this uncall'd for intrusion."
" Intrusion !" I cried ; " explanation's from you.
I came—but—ah !—is not this thirty-two ?"
Those youths saw me blush, and I witness'd their glee,
As he coldly replied, " No, sir, no—twenty-three."
I rose with a look full of daggers and kicks,
And muttering something of dinner at six,
Confusedly bow'd, and was moving off fast,
When the host added, mildly, "'Tis nearly half-past,"
With a smile, that at once relieved all palpitation,
And induced me to turn for a kind invitation.
" Though late for the soup," he continued more hoarse,
" You will just be in time for the third or fourth course."
Once more I bow'd awkwardly, crushing a sigh,
As I caught, o'er his shoulder, the glance of *her* eye.
I hurried down-stairs in a pet—nay, I swore,
As some cold-blooded footman unfasten'd the door.
A few minutes, pass'd in contentment and pride,
I had sat in that house, and I now stood—outside.
We might moralise well——But my story is told :
The young lady was lost—and my dinner was cold.

Moody's Second Offer.

MOODY'S SECOND OFFER.

No gull so gullible as he that gulls,
The truth is quite enough to take him in,
Its simpleness his craftiness annuls,
Or, all suspicious, when he thinks to win
By acting as 'twere falsehoods that you told him,
He finds that by his very craft you've sold him.

And similar it is with those old beaux
Who've spent a life of lounging and flirtation ;
For none more quick by woman are laid low,
Or plunge in danger with less hesitation,
Where on themselves is turn'd their ancient battery
Of sham advances, and false empty flattery.

Thus 'twas with Moody, as hereafter seen ;
Meantime his reputation had recover'd
From the bad name in which it long had been
When erst from fere to fere he weakly hover'd,
But now to all, indifferent,—a Plato,
Each woman thought that she could fix his fate, oh !

And so when Moody, after London's season,
Where he had lounged about with silent eyes,
Went o'er to Paris, not with any reason
Save his ennui, discover'd in surprise,

Now that he'd pass'd the limits of all passion,
That all the women loved him from compassion.

I know not why, but when a man is hipp'd
From sickness of the world, or chances slipt,
Looks grimly sad and stiff as any poker—
Sallow in features as a constant smoker,
Still neat in dress, but seemingly half-fed,
The ladies always vote him thoroughbred.

But so it is,—at every ball you'll see
Some tall, grave figure, like a spectral tree
Or "ancient mariner" congeal'd in ice;
Just ask your fav'rite flirt—she'll say "he's nice."
And then he stands grim, silent, stately, tall,
Between the two saloons, or 'gainst the wall,
With hat in hand, as if his time were past,
Although he ever stays until the last.
A ripple of a smile, whene'er address'd,
He faintly lifts, as if his smiles were bless'd;
Or down at supper talks a fun'ral chat,
But takes no supper—far too sad for that;
His promenade, the streets 'twixt light and dark,
He cannot condescend "to do the park."

Meet him at dinner,—as it would be rude
Not to reply—he'll talk if you'll intrude
Your conversation first, although awhile
He'll answer only with that death-like smile.
Be bold, talk on,—and then he'll condescend
To guile you on your way, until you end;

He'll slowly answer, all inflection scorning,
Dreary as city-bell on Sunday morning.
And then his views about those common matters,
Concerning which a dinner-party chatters,
Will quite upset your mind,—in short or long
Both you and all the world besides are wrong ;
Your cherish'd heroes from their places tumbled
With such a quiet firmness that you're humbled,
You dare not answer, for you feel admonish'd,
He's won a point in seeing you astonish'd—
You give polite consent,—then hear with groans
His setting up of pigmies on those stones
Where once stood giants you were ever taught
From early youth to honour,—now they're nought ;
Perhaps his views exhibit copious reading,
But, though the meal is full, unwholesome feeding ;
And though he's seen the world, known man, and travell'd,
The art of finding fault has sole unravell'd.
As thus the world's applauded are o'erthrown,
He's forced to raise some dwarflings of his own,
Yet all so languid—it's not here nor there
What the world thinks, indeed, he doesn't care,
He talks and talks (although he sees your fright),
As if it were absurd that he's not right ;
And yet in truth it's all a clever blind
To hide undoubted shallowness of mind ;
That stiffen'd air, that silent, sadden'd smile
(As if he bore with this world for a while),
That public way,—to be from all a shrinker,
Are all the liv'ry of the would-be thinker ;
And open-hearted women, in their haste,
Adore as real gems this common paste.

And Moody, who'd found a natural part
Had ceased to be his, when ceased the heart
To beat with the pulse of unblemish'd youth,
And the cheek's bloom had fled with the bloom of truth.
Determined to don this solemn guise,
As the easiest to learn of all fashion's lies,
He closely watched, and he studied long,
But he wouldn't come out till he felt quite strong
In the solemn part, which should win his way
With the belles from whose favour he'd fall'n away ;
And as in this town he was too well known,
He commenced in Paris, where all alone
He could act his part, for there to be gay
Is the effort of all from over the way ;
And *savans* there (if they own a shirt)
Attend the saloons in a suit of dirt,
And a real thinking man, who's perfectly clean,
And not to be smelt, is a thing to be seen ;
So working his rôle, to suit his age,
Our hero soon was quite the rage.
Many the efforts to pierce the mystery
Of humbug Moody's common history ;
Some said that, in some other clime,
He must have committed some horrid crime,—
An awkward rumour he wish'd to cease,
As it brought two calls from the French police,
Which almost caused his *éclat* to fall,
As it nearly came out he was nothing at all.
The middle-aged ladies in gross opined
That his soul was bow'd with his mighty mind ;
While the younger express'd their firm belief
That his heart had been sear'd with some fearful grief.

His mournful air, and his low replies,
The mysterious look of his dreamy eyes,
Convinced each one 'twas her special mission
To find some balm for his sad condition.

Amongst these latter (and there were plenty)
Was a fair young widow of eight-and-twenty ;
She had married young to this pious end,
To console the age of her father's friend ;
At least so 'twas said, but 'twas also clear,
That the lonely friend had ten thousand a-year.
It was agreed that his married nurse
Should, after his death, possess his purse ;
But the sly old man bequeathed his Katie
His *whole* ; but, "*durante viduitate*"—
A jealous proviso, by which his "tin"
Would go, if she wed, to the next of kin.

Now, by ill-luck, the next of kin was wedded,
So that no hopes could hold in that direction ;
Thus forced to yield to that by widows dreaded,
And being too full of life to court dejection,
She took the all that in her power lay,
And gave full vein to follies of the day.

At first she revell'd in her love of dress,
Her opera-box, society, her carriage ;
She liked them all, but found to her distress
They soon grew stale without the hope of marriage,
And early found her constitution failing,
But took to quacks instead of useless wailing.

At first she tried the "pathies," then the waters
Of all the baths of every kind and nation,
Insured to wash from pleasure's sons and daughters,
The tender'st ailments of their own creation ;
But not, alas ! she found, as on she went,
From sicken'd hearts the canker discontent.

The mind must work to raise the constitution,
And so she took to science and geology ;
And full-dress lectures at the Institution,
That give to idle folks a new apology
For talking large, unconscious of their parody,
On all they hear from glib Professor Faraday.

At length she went to Paris, where she made
The best of her fine fortune, and her figure,
And spun out folly, not at all afraid
Of being talk'd of with an over-rigour ;
Not that French morals are so very hazy,
But that the French consider us half crazy.

But such her curiosity and zeal,
She soon used up what Paris had to show ;
Amidst the blaze of art, she felt the real
Alone could keep her life from being slow ;
So, having tried life's vulgarer solutions,
She took to politics and revolutions.

Now, politics in France are quite unlike
The thing so christen'd in this foggy land ;
Our patriots' fancies it did never strike,
In ladies' drawing-rooms to take their stand,

To mix their patriot loves with lighter loves,
And crush a dynasty in white kid gloves.

We work reform in journals, public meetings,
In long debates, committees, and societies,
In speechifying-dinners, hustings'-greetings,—
All with much labour and sobrieties ;
But politics in France are lively—no fatigue,—
All murder, love, society, intrigue.

And so the widow fill'd her bright saloons
With dark mysterious foreigners, and men
Who brought long sorrows, and much longer spoons ;
The former for her pity, the latter, when
The groaning board was crown'd with plenteous supper,
And the long sorrows of their stomachs upper.

All kinds of patriots were assembled there,
From Spain, and Portugal, and Catalonia,
From Greece, Corfu, from Erin, and Rag-fair,
From all the lands far north to Patagonia ;
E'en one there was, who came express to urge on
A primal revolution in Spitzbergen.

But still they nothing did, except devour,
And drive the long narration of their cares ;
Whilst she would wonder on from hour to hour,
And think herself the centre of affairs,
And fancy that these *soirées* in her bowers
Had influence o'er the acts of higher powers.

She'd act herself, her patriotic friends
Talk'd as they ate, to *do* was p'raps a bother ;
She tried to rouse—for so they work'd their ends,
That each re-union only brought another ;
She would, I fear, have plotted something bloody,
Had she not haply met with mournful Moody.

She almost started when she saw him—here
Was the one being that her soul had craved for,—
A man to be approach'd with silent fear ;
Here was the bottled interest that she raved for,
At once each patriot seem'd a very ninny,—
She scorn'd them all, from Kossuth to Mazzini.

I'll not pursue their course of introduction,
Which much resembled all such tender cases,
Something grew up,—was love the blest production ?
'Twas pseudo-passion, with its painted faces,
An artificial love, whose fountains quickly falter,
Unless the pumps of fortune drive the water.

And then they spring aloft with gaudy show,
More grand than true love's modest constant flowing,
Though economic couples set, you know,
Only on gala days, such pumps a-going ;
But here the fere, with worship and urbanity,
Baited her friend, and hook'd him by his vanity.

The matter soon was settled, though the lady
Display'd a decent portion of reluctance
To name the happy day, though effort made he
Towards that end to make his pretty duck dance ;

She was, in fact, in treaty for her tin,
To save a portion from the next of kin.

She swore, unless he'd let her be a wife,
She'd be a widow all her coming life ;
Let him take half, and after her decease,
His family should have a large increase.
The kinsman soon agreed ; she, happy, gay,
Met her fond Moody, and bespoke the day ;
Moody had, too, his own inferior bother
T' obtain a larger penny from his mother.
At length it all was right ; they met one eve
To take, in love and hope, the final leave
That couples do, before they meet again
To close the rivets of the wedding chain.
To use my verse to tell it, were to waste it,
Sugar to you's not sweet until you taste it ;
I'll say 'twas vows, sighs, blushes, kisses,
Armful embraces, and such other blisses.
At last her lips express'd her latest warning,
And so he went, 'twas getting tow'rds the morning,
Kiss'd her white hand, smiled fondly, shut the door ;
Alas ! poor Moody never saw her more.

Our hero slowly paced towards his lodging
Buried in thought, but sudden was alarm'd
To find two persons were his footsteps dodging,
And then he saw they were both fully arm'd ;
He hurried on, then ran. As on he bounded
He saw four more in front,—he was surrounded.

Thinking them thieves, for "help" he call'd aloud,
But then was told, in English, to be quiet
Or fear his safety; should a gather'd crowd
Oppose the arrest, or else create a riot,
That he was prisoner; 'twas the Emperor's order
To see him safely over Gallia's border.

"And why is that?" the answer, "I not know."
"My clothes and papers?" "All are on the train;
And when you on de paquebôt steamer go,
Ve gif your choses and papiers back again."
Soon the affair and Channel both were over,
And saw our hapless friend safe housed in Dover.

They disembark'd him like a bale of goods,
Or pass'd-on pauper, or exparish'd juggler;
His countrymen received him with cool bloods,
And handsomely suspected him a smuggler,
So that the "Customs" had his boxes ripp'd,
Nor were contented till they saw him stripp'd.

Meantime the lady also was arrested,
But that was managed in a courteous mode;
With smiles and bows, the officer requested
Her stay at home; he could not incommode
Madame with show of force,—'twas but for form
He left the house half-crowded with *gens-d'armes*.

The cause of all this hubbub was the fact,
That bride and bridegroom, and the patriot lot,
Had been discover'd in the very act
Of bringing to a head a dang'rous plot;—

So said the French police, though 'tis no doubt
The plot's intent was never quite made out.

It seem'd that when the lady first assumed
The line of politics (and, by her patriot friends,
Her mind develop'd and her rooms perfumed),
The Paris spies had watch'd the question'd ends ;
But when the patriots jolly grew, and greasy,
E'en their police suspicions wax'd more easy.

However, when our Moody paced the stage,
A quick reaction roused their lull'd suspicions,
Those least to be deceived their honour 'gaged ;
This was a plotter on the worst of missions,
His silence, manners, dress, and facial lines,
All mark'd the leader of the worst designs.

It is a rule of French policeman's art,
That when a man conspires, hush'd and blind
He always looks, and dresses to the part,
But why is quite a myst'ry to mankind ;
Our rogues at home would think such men were fools,
But even *rogues* in France must follow rules.

The case was one the ministry would please ;
A plot was wanted much, if good and sure,
The emperor's life had been too much at ease,
For only danger makes his throne secure ;
Their orders were to make the plot extensive,
Provided that it wasn't too expensive.

And so, when Moody was from home away,
The spies went in and overhaul'd his papers,
Chiefly love-letters; but is't not ev'ry day
We see great fires from the smallest tapers?
With such small lights the Frenchmen made their game,
And soon found stuff to set the world in flame.

My reader, if you've had a first epistle
Of love—deep-burning love, in ample pile,
That made your heart beat and your whiskers bristle,
You'll understand—the widow's loftiest style
Read by the aid of French *bureau* translation,
Might be involved enough—to shake a nation.

They also read the letters Moody sent,
But as they only utter'd what they meant,
Complicity in him could not be proved,
And thus it was he simply was removed.

The lady still was 'neath the eye of power,
And though she wrote to Moody hour by hour,
To all appearance, as might be expected,
Her summonses continued all neglected.
She little knew her letters, so despairing,
Were added to the *procès* then preparing:
She sent them by her faithful *maître-d'hôtel*,
Faithful to her, and the police as well,
The Emp'ror and the wealthy Albionnaise
Clash'd in their interests on his humble ways.
What could he do? He couldn't serve them both,
And yet to split with either he was loath.

Of the police he was indeed afraid,
But then, to balance that, the other paid.
Perplex'd, he served the minions of the law,
But seem'd to serve his mistress more and more.
He swore he always took the *billet-doux*,
And gave them to the hand intended true ;
So that she waited long without response,
And thought herself deserted all at once.
She thought her love poltroon—it raised her anger—
To think he left her in the time of danger.
Now she despised and scorn'd, until her state
Of love was curdled to a kind of hate.

Just then, when Moody thus seemed to reject her,
The next of kin arrived as her protector,
To make his terms (and in his favour rather),
And then to act the condescending father ;
But now at once his efforts were address'd
To get his cousin freed from the arrest :
He went to see the puppies of legation,
And half the *bureaux* of the Gallic nation—
And work'd so hard, his cousin 'gan to feel
He was, indeed, a dear man for zeal.
At last her chains were off, and then perforce
Arose the question of her future course.

Now, since the opening of this painful story,
The zealous cousin's wife had gone to glory.
His grief was o'er, although the death was recent—
He'd hit the very mean to make it decent ;
For though some fools to sorrow are addicted,
It isn't mannerly to be afflicted.

Weep just enough for each departed sinner,
More isn't proper, and may spoil your dinner.

So when the next of kindred made discovery,
His pretty friend had lost her recent lover, he
Proposed himself to be a certain cure,
To make her future, and her fortune sure.
The grief-struck widow yielded to the plan—
The next of kindred was a proper man.
If not himself, one trifle did console—
The thought that she should keep her fortune whole.
Although her heart was dead, for nought she cared,
But then the wedding garments were prepared.

Meantime had Moody writ, and writ, and writ,
Apparently the widow answer'd not a bit.
The more he pray'd pathological, beseeching her,
The lesser chance his letters had of reaching her.
He thought on France to make a new invasion,
But from that plan he yielded to persuasion.
At last he knew the blow,—the *Morning Post*
Reported in full style that all was lost,—
The accomplish'd bride, her beauty, and her coffers,
And thus was baulk'd the second of his offers.

A Telegraphic Trouble.

A TELEGRAPHIC TROUBLE.

THE railway and the telegraph are lauded,
As doing more for us than ever war did ;
And yet, alas, like other institutions,
They bring their own peculiar retributions.
To take the simplest case,—we travel faster,
But go to double smash, when comes disaster ;
We save our time, but then the higher powers
Look out for double work in half the hours ;
It takes the cramp'd inhabitants from town,
Down to the flower'd meads and grassy down :
I know it well,—my own wild Surrey hills
Are now a fumey crowd of cockney vills.
The Continent is op'd to better classes,
To visit mountains, lakes, hotels, and passes ;
But then your tyranny is much deplor'd,
Unless you take your womankind abroad. —
It is not meant *that* works us many ills,
Except a want when come the Christmas bills.
Such flights from town are not at all derided,
Because the pleasure is not all one-sided ;
The train brings up in season many dozens
Of good, but most adhesive country cousins.
It's true your London house is very small,
Yet all expect it's large enough for all.

Next note a progress of a different species
(The fav'rite topic of the platform speeches),
The good deriv'd from intercourse of classes
(A wholesome pasture mingles many grasses).
My nephew, Tom, takes home a deputation
Of train-made friends of doubtful reputation ;
My niece, Maria—lib'ral more than hop'd—
There met a handsome bagman, and elop'd.
I know, myself, in many little journeys,
I tumble over turfmen and attorneys.
Of course, 'tis then I find the train improving,
And feel their talk much prejudice removing,
Implanted in my bosom by my mother,
Who said it was religion. Then another
Has brought me in with Snobs, whose talk has bor'd :
None ever introduc'd me to a lord.
The railway thus, whatever else it doubles,
Has link'd a lengthen'd train of first-class troubles.

Perhaps 'twere better, as an illustration,
To tell a little anecdote or two ;—
How well-plann'd schemes were thwarted to frustration,
By schemes invented purposely to do
All things required for their nice connection,
And bring success or ruin to perfection.

We will not name those common counter-blows
Of tickets lost, or baggages exchanged,
From which so much bad blood or swearing flows.
Though acquiesced in, all would be estranged,
As when a dame finds trousers, razors, straps,
Instead of laces, stays, stiff petticoats, and caps.

But such a thing as this :—As when you're married,
You take a coupé for yourself and bride,
Your privacy is broken, and you're harried
By a bland "guard," who, facing, sits outside
The carriage just before you,—with a smile,
But cutting up your pleasure all the while.

Or such a case as this :—A youth confided
In a young friend (director of a line),
That Emily no more his hopes derided,
And with her Pa he was that day to dine ;
That he'd arrang'd by th' next train to go,
And ere the dinner-time his fate to know.

By luck, it chanc'd the jovial young director
Himself was deeply smitten by the lady ;
He heard the news a little like a spectre,
But saw at once, that were the thing delay'd, he
Had yet a chance. If telegraphic wires
Can do their work, he'll have his whole desires.

He shook the other warmly by the hand,
Said he was glad to hear it,—as was true,
To hear the thing in time for all he plann'd.
He watch'd him mount the train,—then on it fled ;
Then down the line two telegrams were sent,
That to a constable and the lady went.

The trav'ling youth was in an am'rous glow,
When, at an intermediate station,
A bearded policeman let him know
His liberty was hurtful to the nation :

He'd got the word to stop his going further,
Suspected joining in a recent murder.

The frighten'd youth was just regaining breath,
Still feeling faint, and almost pale as death,
When lo ! a special train came rattling by,
But not so fast, but gave him time to spy
The young director rampant on the tender,
With looks triumphant on the poor offender,
And Em'ly's name was midst the rattle waft.
The dup'd one looked again, and saw he laugh'd ;
He would have rais'd his hands in wild defiance,
But painful handcuffs kept them from compliance.
Some hours pass'd in agony and terror,
A message came to say it all was error ;
That the young man at once must have discharge,
And one from the director, thus, at large :—

“ Take my advice, sir, choose another ‘ line,’
Miss E. will form a ‘ junction’ soon with mine ;
Love, you well know, is one of those affairs
In which ‘ promoters’ are forbidden ‘ shares ;’
My ‘ scheme’s preamble’ she had long approv’d,—
I’ve only now for ‘ formal clauses moved ;’
For my ‘ direction’ months she’s made decision,
So why should you and I come in ‘ collision.’
Her ‘ preference’ is mine,—I feel distress
For you, but this ‘ report’ must be ‘ express ;’
Her ‘ governor’s concession’ also gain’d,
The ‘ terminus’ of all is now attain’d.
Farewell,—believe not that a wrong my heart meant,
Or ought but duty to my own department.”

Moody's Third Offer—A Country Visit.

MOODY'S THIRD OFFER—A COUNTRY VISIT.

THE mighty town is void. I'm well aware
That some genteelest persons yet are there ;
Although they're out of town, I should be grieved
Were the old cook's assurance disbelieved.
We have the woman's word—what else supposed,
When all the blinds are down, the shutters closed ;
Ridiculous ! What ? Espinasse M'Grarler
Spend all the autumn in the second parlour ?

Yet it is true ; indeed, I must confess,
The butcher's boy is never there the less ;
I watch the grocer, mark the baker's man,
From the next tap still comes the frothy can ;
And were that lonely cook a monthly nurse,
I deem she ate it all—and none the worse ;
She is not so—then there's one shall unravel,
That Espinasse the bland is not on travel ;
It's something like a lie—but then we feel
It is a mighty thing to be genteel.

The town is void, although its streets and rows and
Places contain as yet two thousand thousand ;
But as we deem that market ill supplied,
Where nought but sprats are plunder from the tide,

So do the great ones of the town declare
That place deserted when they are not there.

The season's over : Moody now reposes,
Smokes his cigar, and as he smokes uncloses
The sacred coffer where his past flirtations
Recline embalm'd in self-congratulations.
He counts the waste of feeling, conquest's cost,
The hearts attracted, and the fortunes lost ;
Smiling recalls his juvenile advances,
When once entangled in a widow's glances ;
Draws a deep breath, recounts the smirking belles,
Whose princely fortunes always turn'd out " sells ;"
Freely forgives the blushing debutante,
Whose innocence referred him to her aunt.
Complacent, muses o'er his many scrapes,
Content to call them now " hairbreadth escapes,"
Yet thinks his destiny perversely plann'd,
To gain so many hearts, but not a hand.

He feels cold time creep slowly o'er his brow,
Crushing the fragile blossoms of his youth ;
It must be never, or it must be now,
That he must court to win, and that's the truth ;
His next advances, of a serious nature,
Must be express'd in Hymen's nomenclature.

Unhapp'ly he'd exhausted all the round
Of his fair friends with marriageable portions,
With all had cut from under foot the ground,
By heartless flirtings in such vast proportions ;

So now he wrote to his adoring mother,
To find him yet a last one and another.

His fondest parent was indeed delighted,
To hear at last of serious intentions ;
Replied at once all fluttering, excited,
Praising the lady that her letter mentions,
To whom she said (so much her heart invented)
Could she but see him wed, she'd die contented.

In fact, she felt she hadn't long to live,
Before she went she'd like to see him settled ;
Moody no heed to this strange fear did give,
Which made the ancient lady rather nettled ;
But then he knew she never talk'd of health,
Except when right in body, thought, and wealth.

So soon through her intrigued contrivance,
Came invitation from the lady's friends ;
Who gave, indeed, their own conceal'd connivance
To Moody's and his mother's plotted ends ;
Once more he took the train to country quarters,
To try again his fortune with earth's daughters.

The lady chosen was a sweet young person,
Pretty enough, and scarcely warm eighteen
(Indeed, he'd often flirted with a worse 'un) ;
Fresh as a flower, or as a May-day queen ;
Just such a rosy, laughing, little party,
As makes the household circle glad and hearty.

Yet was this last love not a high-flown she,
With soul of power or fancies of the fleetest,
But like the last cup from a dish of tea,
If not the strongest, yet might be the sweetest ;
And Moody felt, when choosing for all life,
Perhaps the last were better for a wife.

So Moody thought of marriage, not romance,
Of conjugal affection and soft ease ;
A scene of comfort fill'd his fancy's glance,
Houses (then bills)—then coming round his knees
Troops of young children—then, alas ! those curses
That dog these blessings in the form of nurses.

And fair young Lydia, though secluded bred,
With female instinct knew what he was sent for ;
His commonplace seem'd riddles archly said,
Somehow her feelings guess'd what they were meant for,
So that she fell in love. The little beauty
Thought it was all obedience and her duty.

Her mother was a motherly, kind creature,
Gentle and pious, yet in reason jolly,
With bright good-nature in each healthy feature.
Loving her daughter to the verge of folly,
Though her friend's son, as son-in-law she'd prize,
She watch'd him closely with suspicious eyes.

The father, who had years long gone retired
From business with a fortune, bore the traces
Of one who had in Pleasure's kiln been fired,
And play'd the deuce within a pair of aces ;

His once red face was red and tawny pied,
Like ill-wash'd muslin that's been badly dyed.

His once gross form was spare-wan, yet not thin,
His lost rotundity had not renew'd
Youth's finer roundness and close-fitting skin ;
Though the full bottle he had long eschew'd—
Not that he was for temperance a sticker,
But that his wife allowanc'd him his liquor.

All things in favour, 'twasn't very long
Ere Moody saw the tone of Lydia's feelings ;
But still he paused before he courted strong,
Knowing the risk of evil-tuned revealings—
In fact, he fear'd Boy Cupid's steps and traps
By sad experience from his past mishaps.

Their party dined at five, and, when
The ladies had retired, then
The franchised husband, with a grin,
Call'd for a bottle from a fav'rite bin
With jolly welcome, which was half excuse,
And had, I fear, been many years in use,
Exclaiming, " Moody, 'tisin't ev'ry day
We sée you here,—let's crack another—aye?"
A new found fact—alas ! it wasn't news ;
And yet what guest could dare refuse,
For that would put his host quite in the blues—
Partly from pride, but more, that was his line,
To make his youthful friend a plea for wine.

There are some ancient boys, as all must know,
Whose jolly hearts with warmest welcome glow,
Who're glad to make your presence at the table
The cause for taking more than leaves them stable ;
Who're quite your friends before you scarcely know them,
Your coming gets them more than wives allow them ;
They go up stairs unsteady, oh ! the shame,
They hiccup it in secret you're to blame,
And so your gentle hostess, such the plan,
Quickly decides " that you're a bad young man ;"
Thus both to tea each night went rather fuzzled,
How to escape the flask our Moody puzzled ;
Restless with love and wine, he roll'd in bed,
And rose each morning with a splitting head ;
So, spite the verdant turf and breezy down,
He felt much worse than when he quitted town.
It was a *pose* replete with dread suggestion,
Thus to be caught at once in love and drinking ;
To lose at once his heart and his digestion ;
To be observed by Lydia, whose soft shrinking
Hopes grew on apace,—could she dissemble,
She always found poor Moody in a tremble.
Alas ! poor creature, she was much mistaken—
'Twas by her father's port his nerves were shaken.
The offer must be made,—he felt a dread
His health might fail,—at least his nose get red ;
Moody made efforts to escape the system,
And tried excuses, but the old boy pish'd-'em,
Saying, " It's nonsense for a youth like you
To be so fearful of a glass or two ;
Why, look at me, sir !—years I've had my quantum,
And as for doctors ! why, I never want 'em."

Poor Moody was the soberest of mortals,
And soon unusual port laid ope the portals
Of his politeness,—so that rather quick
He said rude things, and spoke them rather thick,
So that each evening when the tea was ready
He sought the tea-room,—as he thought steady.
His fascinations found he, with surprise,
Raised strange displeasure in the ladies' eyes;
He could not fancy what it was about,
He thought he was agreeable out and out.
The gentle Lydia sought her mother's wing,
And wouldn't laugh, nor talk, nor play, nor sing;
She changed, besides, the line of her behaviour,
And grew from day to day more sad and graver;
And when he tried the tale of love to broach,
She gently waved it off with sad reproach.
Moody would half opine,—he knew the reason,
And yet to accuse her father seem'd like treason.
He struggled to be free, but in that act
Found that he'd been too forward to retract;
In truth, his love affair was nearly ended,
The Senior was so mortally offended,
The moment that he found 'twas Moody's game
To hint their revels were alone his blame.

“At least,” he thought; “oh! not the ladies surely,
Can think that I'm in fault alone and purely;
They must be well aware their lord and father
Loves the full bottle, not a trifle, rather!
Oh! it's all nonsense,—Lydia is displeased
Because I have not offer'd,—so she's teased.”

Well! the time came,—when there was no escape
From list'ning to his tale,—she liked the scrape;
He told her *all*,—he'd others told before,
On this occasion vow'd a little more.
He swore he loved her,—loved her more than any,
He very wisely didn't say how many.
She smiled, she blush'd, she trembled, sigh'd,
Then yielded to her destiny, and cried.
“Why should she weep,” he said; “this hour of bliss
Look up my heart's delight,”—then gave a kiss.

She said, “I—I”—her words no further went,
Then trembling, whisper'd, “Ask mamma's consent.”

“I will, my love,—to them this is not news,
I know their wishes, and they won't refuse.”

She tearful spoke, with air of deep dejection,
“I fear, my friend, you'll find there's one objection.”

Next morning found our friend in *tête-à-tête*
With the good mother,—to be told his fate.
He made the case out, stated all his means,
How on her lips her daughter's future leans;
The family friendship,—rank,—estate,—condition;
He did his best to build a good position.

The lady silent sat, within her lap
Rested her hands, and still, as if she'd wrap
Her thoughts within herself—yet all the while
She noted her attention with a smile.

Quiet, yet stern, while Moody onward hammer'd
With his old tale, then nervous grew, and stammer'd;
Indeed, it was a delicate affair
To tell it while she wore that silent air;
At length he finish'd—then she softly spoke.
Her silence into agitation broke;
She essay'd for a moment, paused, then paused again,
Then said,—“ My friend, it is indeed with pain,
Both for my daughter's sake, perhaps yours too,
To have to veto what you wish to do.”
This was a blow to Moody, but he bow'd,
Mutter'd a secret something—not aloud;
Then both were silent—then he found a tongue,
Saying, “ I *am* surprised; in truth among
The many reasons, with me certain went,
To urge my suit was hope of your consent;
Thinking, when giving rein to all my longings,
That you approved myself, and my belongings.”

“ Indeed, sir, all the matters meet approval,
Except one bar—I fear without removal.

“ I had a letter when you first came here,
Praising your character and morals;
It call'd you pious, generous, dear,
Of gentle manners, and unknown to quarrels;
And though still young,—in flirting only wild,
In fact the man I'd wish for, for my child.

“ Alas! it spoke not of the one dark stain
That turns all other brightness into night,

That seems mordanted on your yielding brain,
E'en now I fear, your fatal, sole delight ;
How could I give my child to such a curse !
That you indulged before her makes it worse.
And now I'm on the subject, let me say,
There is one thing of which I must complain,
You've led my husband on from day to day
To drink as you ; again, and yet again
I've warned him, yet, alas ! the force
Of your example urged him on his course.

“ But soon you leave us, so at least that wrong
Will cease, I trust—a leaf we turn to-morrow ;
But my poor daughter, whose affections strong
I find you've won,—in pity for her sorrow,
The mother's heart would yield, were't not assured,
That such a vice as this is never cured.

“ And now farewell ; it is a bitter pain
To speak such words to Martha's only son,
And she a friend I ne'er may see again,
But still it must be said, and it is done.”
Pressing his hand, she sadly smiled, and left him,
While he believed his senses were bereft him,
And stood indignant, watching her retreat ;
Oft had he thought to burst out while she spoke,
“ It is your husband, Madam, at whose feet
You must lay down the blame,”—but then awoke
The feeling, that the husband to the wife
'Twas useless to accuse, for peace or strife.

Of course, he'd leave the house that very minute,
 'Twere wrong to be another hour in it ;
 He soon packed up ; he hurried to the station
 Without farewell, and choking with vexation.
 Just as he near'd the garden's farthest bounds,
 He met fair Lydia wand'ring thro' the grounds ;
 She paused, and said, half-weeping, as she stood,
 " Farewell ! and, for your own sake, do be good."

" Bother !" said Moody, as she pass'd from sight,
 " Zounds, she believes it too,—and thinks she's right."

One more rencounter had he yet in pain ;
 He met the jolly father at the train,
 " Good-bye !" said he, " I'm grieved, I am indeed,
 We could not make all matters quite agreed ;"
 Then as he went, he with a warning air,
 Making the sign of drinking, said, " Beware !"
 Moody flush'd up with anger (but the steam
 Happily crush'd his accents in its scream),
 He bellow'd out, as if his voice would split,
 " Good-bye, indeed, you damn'd old hypocrite !"

* * * * *

When Moody's mother came to know the reason
 Her son returned, she " fire " cried and " treason ;"
 Then she wrote madly to her former friend,
 Which brought a like reply ;—nor yet an end
 Has even now their correspondence found ;
 (Although the boy and girl are duly bound
 To other partners)—writing, if not hating,
 The two old dames go on recriminating.

The Masquerade.

THE MASQUERADE.

OF all the troubles of the boudoir species,
There's none the ladies feel much more unkind
Than the impulses many men possess
To mix coarse manners with the more refin'd.

Not that they scorn a gossip quite improper,
If only started in the form of scandal ;
They wrap ill-nature in a perfum'd cover,
Nor fear a dagger with a jewell'd handle.

Of course, there's nothing ill at all intended,
Nor least indelicate, when seen the end,
No more than telling " Doctor " all those things
They wouldn't utter to a female friend.

Of course, for comfort's sake, they ought to know
Who of their circle bend from life's erect ;
And thus a stream of naughty talk may flow,
Under the plea of keeping things select.

Not that I doubt that women, gentle, pure,
Are of the world the portion most refin'd,
But that they oft misjudgingly endure
To lose the kernel when they scorn the rind.

Or cherish things, when cover'd with false bloom,
The which they should in very nature fly :
They love the civet—when its call'd perfume,
And eat a morbid fowl—as Strasbourg pie.

You mustn't touch their hands but with the glove,
Unless you're jewell'd like the paws of Holkar ;
They'll scarce admit your fondness when in love,
Yet let coarse fellows squeeze them in the polka.

In reading, as in talk, they hold the strife,
The purest works unthinkingly disowning
If only they're connected with coarse life,
And yet enjoy the poems of Mrs Browning.

We know it is refin'd from home to travel,—
So our young ladies, when they go abroad,
Will see the naughtiest things without a caviel,
Although our honest roughness is abhorr'd.

Just sing your friends a harmless comic song,
That touches on a range of life below them,
You'd better leave the house, and will be wrong
If e'er again you should attempt to know them ;
And yet those dames will hear, unshock'd and easy,
Most doubtful *chansons* in the *Champs Elysees*.

But though the women, filling life with fictions,
Grow such a crop of oddest contradictions,
They know too well the dignity of station,
To pass like errors in the male creation.

Of all the forms of coarseness,—be afraid
 Of seeking pleasure in a lower grade;
 Are you as good as when dispatched from heav'n;
 That is a fault that scarce can be forgiven.
 There's nothing more, be sure, that women feel,
 Than male connections wanting the genteel.
 Be never led away by jolly "fellers,"
 To hear good music in the cider cellars;
 Your ladies will despise you—e'en tho' after,
 They ask your escort to "*La Traviata*."
 "*Evans*" is moral,—but, pray, amend your ways,
 And take your sisters to the Paris plays;
 'Tis true your French and theirs may stay your gleaning
 The fullest license of their double meaning;
 But still we know lie there, thoughts that would rouse
 Disgust and anger in a public-house.

* * * *

These thoughts on manners to my mind recall
 A scrape that did a loving pair befall:
 Husband and wife, who'd married from affection,
 And yet on this point nearly broke connection.

The lady was the daughter of a dame,
 The last descendant of an ancient name,—
 Ancient but not prolific,—what was worse,
 The pedigree was longer than the purse.
 Her six-room'd cottage was a house of pride,
 Haughtier than all the wealthy country side;
 Though poor, indeed, this dame would ne'er abate
 The fancied needs of her decaying state.
 The house was order'd with a painful niceness,
 As if abundance call'd for much preciseness.

The faded gard'ner, "butler" there yclept,
Into an ancient liv'ry daily crept,
Worn with great care, and not without alarms
Of rents,—yet button'd with a coat-of-arms.

Frugal their meals, as suited their condition,
With all their plate and glass in requisition.
Finish'd the simple feast,—the dame would say,
"Mellish, I think we'll take no wine to-day."
"Please you, my lady," quoth the ancient "feller,"
Although he knew were neither wine nor cellar.

Really of ancient blood, by strict propriety,
She kept the very lead of old society;
The upstart mourn'd unless she grac'd his ball,
And stiffly took the precedence of all.
In secret thought,—her temples often burn'd,
Such invitations could not be return'd,
And so she said (scarce hoping to deceive)
"A stricken widow never should 'receive.'"
Her lord was slain in fight,—for other needs,
As well as that, she always wore her weeds.

It may be well suppos'd, her only child—
A girl—was not permitted to run wild.
A model child, indeed, not oft revealing
The naughtiness of showing nat'ral feeling.
And yet she had a stock, and that in plenty;
She fell o'er head in love ere one-and-twenty;
An age at which, according to tradition,
No maiden of that house dar'd such sedition.

Indeed, her proud mamma was rather nettled,
To find (without a settlement) her settled.

Her husband was a poor one, yet of worth,
A "sucking chancellor" of noble birth,
Who, living years in chambers all alone,
Had ting'd his manners with an under tone.
Accustom'd to his dinner and his ease
At the old "Cock," or "Cheshire Cheese,"
No wonder that, on ent'ring married life,
He often puzzled his fastidious wife ;
She tried affection, scolding, joking,
To drive him from that nasty vice of smoking.

By sticking dirty feet upon the fender,
Or entering in his hat, he'd oft offend her ;
Or tried her patience, with his rolling ease ;
Or nervous system, by a startling sneeze ;
Or entertained his guests to chaff and cramming,
With tales a leetle broad, and sometimes d—ning.

And soon (when pass'd the honeymoon's delights)
He'd often stop out very late at nights.
Poor girl,—she thought rebuke would raise a storm,
So plann'd a quiet system of reform ;
By patience and affection, back she brought him
To the good breeding that his mother taught him.
Had she stopp'd there,—she'd kept her gain'd control ;
But, having won a part, she wish'd the whole.

Once off, she never could her pace diminish,
Her perfect lord still wanted yet a finish.

Correction should be smooth, and broad, and bold,
 Not stippled,—like a portrait set in gold
 The picture would be lost,—without connection,
 A jumbled mass of highly-wrought perfection.
 She stippled o'er his manners, more and more,
 Until he found his home a growing bore.
 Denied the ease he once enjoy'd at home,
 He sought it where the polish couldn't come;
 Good cause for great alarm,—of all mishaps,
 None darker than a married man's relapse.
 She found out means to ascertain his haunts,
 Then felt reproach, she hadn't known his wants;
 Harmless they were—were she neglected ever,—
 His reading-room, the cricket-field, the river.
 With such a course she tried to rest content,
 But soon she found he rather farther went;
 The billiard cue he handled, then at club
 He often long remain'd to have a "rub."
 And, worst of all, whenever late benighted,
 He oft return'd—what ladies call—excited.

* * * * *

One night her maid was combing mistress' head,
 The damsel sigh'd

"I vishes I vas dead!"

"Why so?"—the question—

"Lauks, ma'am, I'm afraid
 That master's gone to Jullien's *marskirade*!"

Her mistress started from her, frighten'd, pale,
 And, breathless, listen'd to the gossip's tale.
 He had, indeed, in fancy dress attir'd,
 Gone with the crony that she least admir'd.

Here was a shock!—her outrag'd sense of right
 Pass'd o'er her bridal feelings like a blight;
 His pleasures sought ere now from home away,
 Were but the loungings of a joyless day.
 But this was vice. Her cheeks are red with blushes,
 When on her mind a thought of something rushes,—
 Jealous? Jealous, not she! of those her heart
 Scorns as unfit for such an equal part.
 She'll go herself—ha! ha! yes, go and brave him;
 And now she weeps, she'll go, but go to save him.
 Some ladies have a strange unshap'd conception,
 That they can save a man by some deception:
 By stealing pipes, or locking up the prog,
 Or putting double water in the grog.
 Then others "save" by always being planted
 Exactly in the place where they're not wanted.
 And seldom with success in either fashion,
 Except to put their husbands in a passion.
 And so this outrag'd wife can save, she weens,
 By trespassing upon immodest scenes.

A domino was soon procured,—a dress
 That muffled well, yet left her gracefulness;
 A bouquet—gloves—and last, not least, a mask,—
 Her carriage at the door,—then to her task.

* * * * *

Arriv'd—she, trembling, sought an upper tier,
 And watch'd the putrid life below in fear,—
 Outwardly brilliant, an e'er changing maze
 Of light and colour, met her anxious gaze,—
 Bedizen'd men—but gentlemen in name;
 Richly clad women, whose commencing shame,

Though wrapt in fulsome plenty, was the gate
Of hard neglect, want, penury, and hate.
And then she heard the music—mighty band—
That sunk the beauteous in the strutting grand;
That vulgaris'd the best, and wrought it down
To meet the vice-wrapt wishes of the town.
And then she saw great *Mons* :—his baton waving
With most heroic zeal,—and truly slaving
For the “crescendo,”—ere the final crash
Sent half the tympana around to smash :—
It crash'd,—he sank with almost lifeless air
Into the cushions of his velvet chair,
As if for ever ;—quitting then e'er more
His love of sound, his passion for “encore.”

Dazzled with light, confus'd with all around,
And half delirious with distracting sound,
The lady watch'd the scene of empty glare,
Almost oblivious of her purpose there ;
When suddenly she saw, but near the end
Of the large pit, her husband and her friend.

With that strange impulse anxious women feel,—
The same that brought her to that place,—
She suddenly resolv'd her presence to reveal,
And meet her husband face to face.

Without a plan or purpose form'd, she glides
Down to the teeming promenade ;
Passion gives strength, the mask her blushes hides,
She hopes for conquest and reward.

She stands beside him, but to her despair
He heeds not, though his rattling friend,
Attracted by her modesty and air,
Attempts her graces to commend.

She feels, as women say, about "to sink,"
To hear his easy observations,
Frank in themselves, but franker made by drink,
And spotted with insinuations.

She look'd towards her husband for protection,
And then remember'd that her mask
Had for a time disjointed that connection,
And e'en debarr'd her from her task.

Here was an end to all her female plotting ;
An accident might make disgrace ;
She trembled, truly, at the scrape she'd got in,
And wish'd herself well out the place.

Here was a man, who at her husband's table
Scarce dar'd to meet her purer eye,
To speak three words unblushing quite unable,
Because a lady made him shy,

Addressing her with jokes, and sly allusions,
The tip-top of the slangy style,
And thinking she received his bold intrusions,
Her husband present all the while.

She nat'rally by habit drew to him
Who was her lord, although unknown ;
Indeed, from fear—but yet as if from whim—
She plac'd her arm within his own.

Her heart beat fast to find her husband shrank,
And quietly unlink'd her hand,
Saying, " An honour that—I'm bound to thank ;
My friend you'll find at your command."

The lady was obliged to get support,
By leaning back against the wall ;
To save herself was now her only thought,
She saw her plans were folly all.

She tried to slip away, but ere she went—
By sad ill-luck—she chanced to spy,
In her lord's pouch, a handkerchief ostent,
She thought might serve her by-and-by.

And so she quietly put in her fingers,
And drew the cambric from its cover,
But while one little piece within it lingers
The friend perceived the quaint manœuvre.

Whether the friend was hurt at being slighted,
Or really thought the girl a thief,
He caught her hand, and almost seem'd delighted
To call aloud the last belief.

A crowd was gather'd, and the quick police
To save disturbance march'd her off
Tow'rds the seats of guardians of the peace.
Behind the street-boys ran to scoff.

The hapless dame had only time to ask
To be allow'd the cover of her mask,
But soon they reach'd the station dread of Bow,
Whither the friend and husband also go.
The charge was made,—and then, oh! shame, disgrace,
The lady's told to show her hidden face;
The husband near her stood,—anxious to know her,
Who was so amorous of his cambric blower.
“Great George!” he cries, “my wife, by all that's blue!”
“No sir,” she weeps, “your wife, by all that's true;”
She seized the woman's guard for wrongs and fears,
And stopp'd all further question by her tears.
Of course the lady quickly was releas'd,
It was no theft, according to the law.
If all the women who'd their husbands eas'd
Of chattels on the sly were made to draw
Sharp justice on their heads,—how many houses
Would soon be wanting in their female spouses.

How they made up the diff'rence 'twixt themselves
Is not related in the legend that I tell;
'Tis said they put their quarrels on the shelves,
And ever after got on very well.



The Shy Young Man.

THE SHY YOUNG MAN.

PART I.

My readers all must now and then
Have come across some shy young men ;
A class whose picture's difficult to trace,
Its chiefest *feature* being want of *face* ;
Whose humour springs from being void of fun,
And points eccentric from desiring none.

The shy young man, too timid far
Duly to work the common forms of life,
Is ever in guerilla war :
His quaint humility the cause of strife.
Just as the quaker, to avoid the gay,
Is more conspicuous in his suit of gray.

The shy young men are all alike ;
At least the set you meet about
The drawing-rooms of London, strike
As being from one mould come out.

Now first,—They always come too early,
At least an hour before the time ;
In dishabille they catch you fairly,
And smile quite innocent of crime.

They're "mounted" in a frame of dress,
But far too jimmy for their ease;
They think a crumple great distress,
And ruin to their powers to please.

And, when with you that fatal hour
They spend, their conversation crumb
On Madame Tussaud, or the tower,
Or the new glories of Tom Thumb.

Or other topics up are brought,
So very stale, so very true,
And so long banished from your thought
They sometimes serve as good as new.

When guests arrive—of course he stands,
And, like the host, he smiles and bows,
Or shyly offers to shake hands
With persons that he hardly knows.

And when your chamber fairly fills,
In nervous fit he roams about;
Or else your vase of roses spills,
Or turns your print-books inside out.

When butler next the meal announces,
Although you've warn'd him of his lady
Upon the wrong he surely pounces,
And off he walks before you're ready.

When, too, your guests are round the table,
 And in some order you have got 'em,
 Then come your struggles to be able
 To get him seated near the bottom.

The shy young man, unapt to choose,
 Partakes of all that's to him handed ;
 Feeling too timid to refuse,
 As if to surfeit he's commanded.

Then after dinner, flushed with wine,
 He oft attempts some small attentions ;
 Tells a young lady she's divine,
 And then protests he's no intentions.

At length he goes, and in the hall
 He dons a suit of Macintosh's ;
 A waterproof, nor is that all,
 A wrapper, mittens, and goloshes.

* * * *

* * * *

Unapt in proper post to stay
 He's nearly always in the way :
 And worse—detected out of place,
 He never backs it out with grace ;
 But, with confusion, blows a little bubble,
 To the dimensions of a D. R. Trouble.

At balls the shy youths stand in pairs
 About the only door you've left
 To open on the crowded stairs,
 As if of senses quite bereft.

Perhaps you sharply move them on—
They blush and smile, then stand anon
Placid—unconscious to all faults,
Just in the circle of the waltz.

* * * *

A shy young man was once invited
To a grand ball ; and quite delighted
Put on a pair of snowy gloves,
And polished boots, such little loves ;
With golden-braided cashmere vest,
All like a tailor's pattern drest.
His hair was curl'd, for straight and meek
It usual hung beside his cheek,
With light red face, and like grey eyes,
He deem'd himself a lady's prize.

This handsome youth, in Hansom cab,
Leans back in placid contemplation ;
To read again the invitation.
He seeks in vain ; ah ! what a stab—
The note is gone, but could he make,
In time, or place, or aught, mistake ?

But when he reaches Bedford Square,
He sees no lighted windows there,—
No dashing carriages about,
No lacquey tall, nor little boys,
In search of light, and fun, and noise,
Nor the bright bustle of a rout.

But on he went, for he supposed
They'd only had the shutters closed ;

That when he enters number five,
He'll find the mansion all alive.
Arrived, the flaps he open flings,
And boldly knocks, and loudly rings ;
The tardy door is oped to him—
He enters in : the hall is dim,
Yet round it num'rous hats in piles,
Which speak of man,—could woman's smiles
Be kept away ? for it is plain
So many men would meet in vain.
Whatever doubts his mind may meet,
He's far too timid to retreat ;
Besides, the footman (who appears
Surprised) precedes him up the stairs ;
So now, whatever may befall,
He's in for something or a ball.

His salutation made,—a glance
Show'd him he wasn't there to dance :
The gentlemen he saw were old,
Ill-shod, ill-dressed, and bald, and cold ;
All close engaged about some topic
(He heard it not) of conversation ;
He found they were, by observation,
The class they call the " Philanthropic."
The ladies there, and they were few,
Were neither young, nor old, nor blue ;
But rather favour'd most the class he
Had heard bad people call the *passée*.

His hostess comes : she, buxom, forty,
Yet tall, majestic, rich, and haughty,

Looks on the youth whose plain mistake
Makes his poor soul within him quake;
His curléd hair starts from its roots,
His blood seems sinking to his boots.

But as she speaks she on him smiles,
Which for an instant fear beguiles :
"I fear," she says, "you've made an error
(Poor Shyly sank to dust with terror);
'Tis not to-night, but this day week,
We have the ball I think you seek,
But still I hope you'll here remain,
You'll get some nurture for the brain;
We hold to-night a zealous soirée,
To hear a rather mournful story.
You'll hear some eloquent discourse,
The first of our intended course;
That is the lect'rer, and these others
Are all his philanthropic brothers.
But now," she said "you've my description,
I wait the amount of your subscription."
The shy one smiled and look'd quite pleased
If not himself, his purse was eased.

The party gather'd round about,
One then intending to speak out.
They all were seated near the fire,
One seat remained *sans* occupier.
Towards that seat the shy man went,
To take it for himself intent;
It was a sitting boudoir-stool,
And richly work'd in Berlin wool;

And on it lay, as on a mat,
Asleep, a monster Persian cat,
With long grey fur, both soft and silky,
And underneath the body milky.
It lay so moveless and so still,
And seem'd a portion of the work to fill ;
The fur's soft tints, from deep to deeper changed,
Well might have been by female hands arranged ;
So one, not knowing that it really lived,
Might as to its existence be deceived.
This curl'd-up brute, so soft and flabby,
Was twice, at least, a common tabby.
Whether the youth was aught near-sighted,
Or by his shyness was benighted ;
Or whether he thought the cat and stool
Form'd one inanimated whole,
Is not explain'd : he smiled and blush'd ;
But, awkward, 'cross the room he rush'd ;
Unhesitating down he sat,
And plump a-top the sleeping cat.

Just then the lecture was begun,
Attentive round sat every one ;
As the first accent of the speaker fell,
Their ears were splinter'd by a yell—
Angry, hideous—such as wake
The Indian hunters in the brake,
When the wild tiger of Bengal
Roars forth a whole zoological ;*

* Any one visiting the upper part of Regent's Park at feeding-time will understand this.

Or take a more familiar simile,
Like the wild scream from lovely Emily,
When once she on my bosom sigh'd,
And sudden found my hair was dyed.

The Persian cats, we know between us,
The savagest of all their genus ;
So think we not that Pussy long
Contented lay 'neath such a wrong.
She sprung revengeful on her foe,
And made him leap in direst woe,
Fixing her talons, 'midst his screeches,
In a quaint portion of his breeches.
He round the chamber, in a course,
As wild as ran Mazeppa's horse,—
O'er sofas, chairs, and tables flew,
Amongst the philanthropic crew,
Who fled before him all afraid,
When needed most to render aid ;
Who would not run him such a race,
With such a demon on the chase ?

The house was roused, the servants throng
The gentlemen and dames among ;
Had it not been for their pell-melling,
The man and cat might still be yelling.
A plain and rather stupid cook
The fury round the body took,
And, with a sudden effort, pickt him
Off the shy, hapless, torn victim.

* * * * *



"A plain and rather stupid cook
The Fury round the body took,
And, with a sudden effort, pickt him
Off the shy, hapless, torn victim."

Twitches of pain, and breathless sighs,
Succeeded to hysteric cries ;
As deep in terror and in tone
As the long-anguished hollow groan
Moan'd forth, when came my comrade Binns,
To hear his "son and heir" was twins.

The shy one left—

* * * * *

Or came he more, or yet the ball forgot,
Is still unknown,—the legend sayeth not.

THE SHY YOUNG MAN.

PART II.

In morning calls the shy young man
Exhibits most his shy young plan ;
Long his silence, long his stay,
Too shy to talk or go away.

The shy young man in common calls
Just at the time of expectation
That 'fore a walk or dinner falls,
And throws you out of calculation
As to your day ; your patient powers
He tries by sitting on for hours.

A fair young lady sat one day
Alone, and waiting with a modest hope ;
Her friends were all perchance away,
And scarce she dared to give her wishes scope
That *one* would call ; at least to say farewell,
Who, ere he went, would something have to tell.

Another day, and then he sails,
This was the last and only chance he had ;
And if he not himself avails
Of this, he leaves her weeping, hopeless, sad ;
On these few hours her grief or joy abided,
Or cometh he or not, her fate's decided.

Of course she watches with a beating heart
Each noisy summons at the door :
At last there comes a knock—oh ! gladden'd start,
She sits and listens more and more ;
He is announced !—what meets her anxious scan ?
Good lack ! the simper of the shy young man.

Her cheeks grow pale, and then indignant burn,
She bids him sit, with hesitation ;
In *two* hours more her sisters will return,
But *three* his usual visitation :
Why bid him sit ? for once she might be rude ;
Alas ! she's done it, and she knows he's glued.

She gazes at him with a vacant stare,
A desp'rate faintness at her heart ;
“ Why sits the fool—the stupid—simp'ring there ;
Oh ! if a girl might take her part,
She'd make her fingers tingle on his ears.”
She struggles hard to stem the tide of tears.

Some minutes more, her Eustace may arrive,
And this great booby in the way.
She feels bewildered, yet she must contrive
The means to end his further stay ;
She at him stares, unnerved to form a plan,
But still talks murmuring on the shy young man.

What shall she do to rout this project-spoiler ?
Another man would take a hint ;
She might as well upon an iron boiler
With her soft palm attempt a dint,

As hope the sharpest words her lips could utter
Would rouse his spirit to the smallest flutter.

What shall she do? Or shall she go away,
Or scold him well, or call out "fire!"
And yet she dare not such manœuvres play,
Nor can she for a space retire,
For fear, if such expedient were tried,
Her Eustace might arrive, and be denied.

She gazes, heedless of his commonplaces,
And so intent she looks in fear,
At last he thinks his talk has caught the graces
Most pleasing to a lady's ear:
A loud outlandish knock her friend announces,
And in before the man he on them bounces.

Of course he takes her hand with warmest pressing,
But greets the other with a stare
And something else low mutter'd—*not* his blessing;
His looks the other really scare,
Who casts his timid eyes upon the ground,
Nor dares to raise them, or to look around.

It was but natural that the loving pair
Should keep their conversation to themselves,
Nor heed the silent shy one sitting there,
Counting the books upon the crowded shelves;
So on they went, and growing more devoted,
Forgot that by a third their acts were noted.

All those who've held such dialogues must know

The smallest trifles serve to raise a laugh;
Not that much fun from off them ever flow,
But that the cup of happiness we quaff;
The timid fool mistook the laughs for wit,
And thought he heard a very pointed hit.

The young enamour'd mariner was nearing

By skilful tacks the harbour of his rest;
His words were growing more and more endearing;
The lady blush'd and laugh'd as on he prest;
Just at the last, the shy one thought he saw
The point, and broke out with a loud guffaw.

The lovers woke to earth, and with a start!

"S-I-R"—cried the sailor, springing to his feet,
Quitting the lady snatch'd from off his heart,
Who interposed in time to calm his heat;
The trembling shy one quoth, "I beg your pardon,"
Which sent the damsel blushing to the garden.

Of course, she's quickly join'd by one at least,

Whose conversation is a perfect feast;
Again by shorter tacks he nears the port.
Wild as his native sea, unbound, untaught,
His love breaks forth in one strong rushing tide,
When lo! he sees the shy one at her side.
"Great earth and heaven," he savage thinks,
"Must this young bore still grieve us?
Will he not take the plainest nods and winks?—
It would be only kind to leave us."
He thinks of some revenge in any shape,
Or, better still, some outlet for escape:

Taking advantage of a luckless trip
Of the poor lad, they sharply give the slip ;
Through the dark walks they gallop, more they wander,
And gain quite blown the villa's cool verandah ;
He takes his place beside her ready in a chair.

One moment more the shy young man was there ;
Also half out of breath, to stop their wiles
With a new harvest of his simple smiles.

The loving couple sit in silent huff ;
The gallant thinks of saying, " Sir, enough
We've had of this fine game ; you ought to know
That you're *particularly* ask'd to go."
But then he felt such plain revealings
Might be ungrateful to his sweetheart's feelings ;
He had no right to say, whate'er his guess,
That her response would be a loving " Yes."
And she, poor girl, in common not a coward,
On this occasion felt herself o'erpower'd ;
So delicately placed she dared not say,
" My dear sir, I wish you'd go away."
Once more they tread the garden in despair,
The shy young man attending them with care.
The lovers mute,—the intruder talks
With softest murmurs as he walks ;
Happily unconscious as the dead,
Of all the maledictions on his head.

They heard the clock within the neighbouring tower
Chime forth the coming of the parting hour ;
One half-hour more, and they must say good-night,
Their chance gone by of making things all right.

The seaman feels with bitterness the blight,
Nor comfort takes in thinking he may write,
For when so far to go, it would so tell
To take a more material fare-you-well ;
That form, those cheeks, those hands, those cluster'd tresses,
Had been so long in thought connected with caresses.
He'd hoped when far away on sternest duty,
To bring to mind some touches of her beauty ;
Recall the hallow'd honey of her lip,
In the close bosom of the narrow ship ;
Or cherish in his heart some tender words,
That should amidst all perils be rewards.
But now it was not so (oh ! he shall rue it)
Because this lubber wouldn't let 'em do it ;
What shall he do—thrash him ?—that with ease ;
Or tie him up extended 'twixt two trees ?
Or with his needle-like umbrella stick him ?
Or lengthen out his nose, or simply kick him ?

By luck these desperate designs
Were changed to torture for five mortal hours.

The party went to view the vines,
And forcing-houses for exotic flowers,
Built by the lady's father, who
Indulged a sort of horticultural dream
Of growing tropic plants by force of steam,
But not of that it came to do.

Now when they were the hottest house to leave,
The shy one linger'd far behind ;
A sudden thought of vengeance and reprieve
Struck on the sailor's vivid mind.

He turn'd the steam-cock to its fullest tide,
Shut in his foe and lock'd the door outside;
Then joined his sweetheart with a careless air,
As if unconscious of his victim there.
I need not say he wasted not a minute
In op'ning out his heart with all then in it.

When he had heard his fond one's love decree,
He meant, indeed, to set his victim free;
But now immersed in passion, happy, blind,
The boiling booby vanish'd from his mind,
Gave his last kiss, forgot the steam to alter,
And went off joyous on his road to Malta.

Meantime the shy young man had smiled
At what he thought was merely meant as joke,
Nor till some time he had beguiled
In looking at the plants, to danger woke,
Nor thought the deed was meant for any harm,
Until he felt unnaturally warm.

The tropic plants from Afric's torrid shore
Began to droop their petals more and more,
The boiling steam their strength had fairly done,
Accustom'd as they were to broiling sun.
The youth entrapp'd, now watched with eager eyes
A small thermometer still rise and rise.
The "blood-heat" bound'ry pass'd, small spaces sever
The climbing metal from the mark of "fever:"
It reach'd the feverish point, and now a quarter
Of the dread space 'twixt that and boiling water.

What shall he do ? it is no time to think ;
The lively mercury never slept a wink ;
The dreadful oven hotter waxed and hotter.
In trouble never an experienced plotter,
His sole device was charging at the glass :
He downward bent his head,—he charged, alas !—
His head went out, the little shiver'd gap,
Between the sturdy frames, became a trap ;
His head was out, his hat thrust down upon it
In that position that we call the “ bonnet.”

His shoulders stopp'd the way, and nothing more
Could be put out, or any part withdrawn ;
Outside, an eastern wind his face was freezing,
Inside, the air was hotter than was pleasing.

Some hours pass'd : then by another way
The owner of the hot-house came to stray
Amongst his loved exotics ; in his hand
He held a lamp, for night was o'er the land :
The over-heating of the place he soon detected,
And in an instant that defect corrected ;
And slowly gazed around, without a word,
Two spectacles on nose, and here a third,—
What strange mysterious growth now met his sight,
Was it some mighty fungus of the night ?—
Some new production from the power of steam,
All indistinctly seen in vapoury gleam ?
His cautious touch was answer'd by the tones
Of hollow grunts, and deeply-mutter'd groans ;
Although not superstitious, sudden dread
Comes o'er him as the fungus groans—he fled !

Moody's First Marriage.

MOODY'S FIRST MARRIAGE.

HAVING related how our facile friend
Was foil'd or hinder'd in his various schemes
Of matrimonial bliss, we near the end—
So common to the story of such dreams ;
He did the very thing he mostly dreaded,
And with a woman he abhorr'd he wedded.

I know not how it is, yet ladies say,
No man his first love ever makes a wife of ;
That Prudence in Love's river swims away ;
Or that the close agreement makes a strife of
Small trifles other kinds of friends pass over,
But form the very life-breath of the lover.

So that the pair who'd die for one another,
At least get seriously hipp'd when parted ;
Grow very touchy on the smallest bother,
And, lastly, quarrel when directly thwarted.
These show what's call'd a spirit, till a tide
Of bitter feelings aids the rush of pride.

The lady takes to tears, the man to drinking,
Until th' advice of friends the breach completes,
Which th' unhappy pair commenced unthanking,
Merely to change the flavours of love's treats,—

Like discord mingled with harmonious sounds.
And so a little squabble ends in wounds.

Or p'raps the damsel gives her heart away
Without the cognizance of dread papa;
She cannot gain consent, nor disobey,
And so, for comfort, promises mamma
To break off with her lover on the first occasion,
Meanly according to her friends' persuasion.

So years roll on, and then they meet again;
The man's strong fibre trembles to its core,
For Time has sooth'd e'en insult's bitter pain.
His heart springs up—to view her face once more:
"Great Heavens!" he cries, "Is that my long-lost fairy?
Is that respectable plump person, Mary?"

But she looks up with fondness, for the heart
Of woman feels a little longer than a man's.
" 'Tis he," she feels; "I see him." What a start!
"How stout my Henry's grown!" Again she scans.
"His nose so red; I'm sure his hair is dyed;
Is this the man for whom for years I've sighed?"

And so they part good friends, but disenchanted:
He to his calling, or another beauty;
She to a wifehood, where she's really wanted;
Making life cheerful in a round of duty—
Keeping her sons from smoking, lies, and stealing;
But most, her daughters from the curse of feeling.

'Tis thus the truest lovers oft are parted
But to be match'd at last in better grain ;
Though hard such fortunes to the tender-hearted,
Yet few would care to make them o'er again.
Creatures of ease, a calm and low contentment
Bemosses o'er love, sorrow, and resentment.

Thus lovers wed awry ; oft'ner still cōquettes,
Who spread for all their spider-woven nets ;
And not less oft do men of expectations,
Who dally out their days in coy flirtations ;
Thinking, their money makes them so sublime,
They'll find the girl they want at any time ;
And so they might, did their conceit permit
Their eyes to see how humble is their fit.

The same with beauties, surfeited with praise,
In looking for the *one* they waste their days,
Until at last arrives the fatal hour,
When the tide ebbs, and then flows back their power.
These find, alas ! in choosing from too many,
The land is bare, without their choosing any ;
And in the game of hearts, at length the losers,
Find those they claim'd to choose are now the choosers.
Thus true Caprice, by no Experience taught,
Is, in the match it scorn'd, unwilling caught.
The same it was with Moody, but for ease
Of narative we'll plunge " in medias res."

* * * *

The lady was a German—not a beauty—
Both fat and forty, but not fair ;

With half a set of teeth, that did the duty
That twice the number could, if there.

Her hair had once been red,—that ardent ray,
Like winter dawn, now struggled with the grey.
The lady's figure, rather broad than tall;
But if to her form "some imperfections fall,
Look on her face, and you'd forget them all;"
Not for its beauty, as with Pope's creation,
But ugliness so great has fascination
That fixes, though it charms not, the attention,—
Like the grotesque, her native land's invention.
The eyes were twinkling quick like living creatures,
That fought for place amidst the mass of features;
The nose was broad and flat; the mouth a cavern,
Or double doorway of a German tavern,
That open'd from the head, beside the ears,
Just like an oyster or a pair of shears.

With arms like bolsters, and with hands like fins,
Her form resembled much those men of snow
Boys build in winter. Then her winks and grins
In balance kept the oddity below
Of *all*; her skin was most a wonder seen—
'Twas sallow, tawny, mottled with pale green.

Though no one who the first time saw this woman
But felt her presence with a kind of shudder,
Yet witness'd with surprise, though scarcely human,
She was of her society the rudder;
For Nature, in her usual startling freaks,
Had granted mind the glow she robbed the cheeks.

Her discourse flow'd on like a rill
Murm'ring and grateful, yet not loud,
And yet so changing, gentle—till
The life seem'd vanish'd from the list'ning crowd ;
Her voice was clear in tone, and such its ring,
The wonder was it burst from such a spring.

Like all the learned of the German crew,
She loved the Mystic rather than the True ;
She was a mesmerist, and sought to please
By giving sleepy friends magnetic ease ;
One thing seem'd strange, at least to a beginner,
The charm was most successful after dinner.

When Moody first beheld this lady,
He felt the same repugnance as did others ;
Nor conquer'd it, no effort made he,
His sense of horror quite his breeding smothers.

So that he heard not ; and the voice,
Whose magic strains encharm'd the painful form,
Bespell'd him not—he'd not rejoice
In simple sound—would sailor in the storm ?

* * * *

At length his constant, firm resistance,
Became a joke amidst the wits about him :
Their badinage nigh wore out his existence,
They swore he loved her—who, who saw, could doubt it ?
Did he look glum, some brutes who thought it pleasing
Then followed in his wake with cruel teasing ;
Whisper'd her name, and poked him in the side ;
And, if he angry grew, but grinn'd more wide.

Others—the fair ones—with more seeming art,
When he abused her, laugh'd, and took her part;
And when he said—"Their joke—could he prevent it?"
With comic graveness ask'd him if he meant it;
Or when he ask'd a polka, with a titter
Whisper'd they thought him pledged to fat De Ritter;
Or at a dinner, scarce disguised his laughin',
The host would ask him to conduct the *grafinn*;
At pic-nics, morning-calls, it made him groan
Ever to find himself with her alone.
But thus his friends contrived—as if compassion
Urged them to aid his ill-assorted passion;
The lady join'd the fun; should e'er his eye
By chance meet hers, she struggled to look shy;
Or to her *mouchoir* or a trembling took,
Or seem'd to ask for pity in a look;
In fact, indeed, she play'd so well her part,
That generous Moody took her grief to heart.
He sought an explanation with her friends,
But all his explanation nothing mends.
Some smiled, as if affecting to believe
His protestations tendered to deceive;
Others spoke loudly, and took pity on her,
Express'd surprise, and hinted much at honour.
Moody felt crazed; thought of murder, flight;
At last declared he'd do what they thought right.

The thing grew serious, as most jokes do,
So they deep counsel took to bear it through;
"Suppose they tell him all; no, that's a bother,
'Twere best to end one *canard* with another.



"FASCINATION."

"The dame," they said, "although it might surprise him,
Would be contented could she mesmerise him."

Moody, without disguise, was so much worn
With this affair, he was indeed forlorn ;
He felt half-mad—whole weary of his life,
To think his fate might find him such a wife ;
So when she ask'd from him so slight ordeal
As mesmerism—he scarcely thought it real.

The clique were met,
The chairs were set,
The circle form'd around
To watch the *rapport*,
And something more,
The fun that they had found.

And Moody was there,
In an easy chair,
But not in an easy mood ;
Before him was seated
The woman he hated,
Till he thought he could take her blood.

Her squat, fat figure
(Like half-bleach'd nigger)
Was before him face to face ;
And her knees touch'd his,
And her hapless "phiz"
Was from his but a little space.

And he feels his liver
Collapse with a shiver,

As she touches his shrinking hands ;
But with surprise
He finds his eyes
Watch hers for their commands.

And as he gazed,
He feels amazed,
Those eyes, which the face so mars,
Come forth to light,
Both soft and bright,
Till they shine like a pair of stars.

And through his fingers
A soft pain lingers,
As she strokes his yielding palm ;
And it grows intense,
Till ev'ry sense
Seems wrapt in a magic qualm.

Then the breathing grows loud
Of the watching crowd,
Then vanishes quite away ;
But through the room
A rich perfume
Seems to make its subtle way.

And as he breathes
Of its cloudy wreaths,
It satisfies his inner
Sense of taste,
Without the waste
Of eating a costly dinner.

And ev'ry limb
Appears to swim
Or rest in a lazy mood ;
Languidly living,
But pleasure giving,
As if it had been shampoo'd.

And to his sight
The taper's light
Grew bright as a summer's sky ;
But with a gleam
As soft as the beam
That shines from young Beauty's eye.

The lady before him
Appears to adore him—
He deeply returns her passion ;
And there comes a change,
Both rich and strange,
In her age, and form, and fashion.

She seem'd as lymph
As a sweet young nymph
From school and her early teens ;
Before she assumes
Those queer costumes
Of jupons and crinolines.

Her hair of gold,
In many a fold,

Flow'd down on her snowy bust ;
And the roses red
Her cheeks o'erspread,
For, as he gazed, she blush'd.

Then grew her eyes
An enormous size,
A fearful pair of "meaners ;"
Their iris' verge
Was twice as large
As Lady Clementina's.

He gazed his fill,
Till no more still
Could he rest in his easy chair ;
He felt his heart
Would burst apart
Unless he clasp'd her there.

He strove to stand,
But e'en his hand
Lay still, and he couldn't rise ;
He sat tight bound
By spells around,
Sent forth from those magic eyes.

Then through his brain
Shot bitter pain,
As if his soul would weep ;
Once more in vain
He strove to gain
The prize—then fell asleep.

Need we relate the wondrous feats
The medium wrought in magic slumber ;
How he sat in chairs that had no seats ;
How he read with his toe a hidden number ;
Correctly told to a single penny
The fortunes of those who hadn't any.

The wonder was, when he awoke
The charm was not dissolved ;
His senses still were all in smoke,
And mystery involved.

And still before his eyes arose
That vision of his brain,
That now in deep conviction grows
As something real and plain.

So, day by day, he more believed
The lady was a grace,
Until he only lived and breathed
To gaze upon her face.

And ever whisper'd soft regards
In melancholy fashion,
Although she 'gainst his fancy guards
That she returns his passion.

At last his case reach'd such a turn
His friends took much alarm ;
E'en the most careless could discern
These spells would lead to harm.

Yet, strange to say, he still retain'd
His faculties entire ;
Although his thoughts were soon constrain'd
In this one wild desire.

A year went on, and still was there
This strange hallucination ;
'Till his well-wishers ceased to care
About his situation.

Nothing could soothe his fever'd mind
But soft magnetic sleep,
To which she could his senses bind
By one slow manual sweep.

So, day by day, his madness grew,
Each day he made an offer ;
And every day she backward drew
From his lunatic proffer.

Something took place in the lady's fate
That seemed to change her tone :
She gave more heed to Moody's state
Than she would care to own.

And laughing said—" That ne'er again
She hoped he'd be absurd ;
He'd best beware,—for even then
She'd take him at his word."

Once more to her, whom once he loathed,
He offer'd heart and hand ;
Fastidious Moody is betrothed
To the ugliest in the land.

His friends were wroth ; the lady said
Her object was for good ;
In this pursuit, she was afraid,
His mind not long had stood.

Forced to agree, they soon approved,
Although his mother sigh'd ;
For he not only madly loved,
But was half-mad beside.

* * * *

The wedding guests were gather'd in the aisle,
And whisper comments as they wait awhile,
For the young bridegroom, and his ancient bride,
Who enter church, most loving, side by side ;
They stand before the altar ; Moody leers
As if were gather'd then the love of years,
As if he hadn't time in coming life
To view the plump one whom he makes his wife.

The ring is on—their hands together prest,
The vows are utter'd, and the couple blest.

But, mercy now ! why starts he far away
In such pale fear—such livid, dark dismay ?

No sooner were the binding answers spoken,
Than, fatal to relate,—*the spell was broken !*

And Moody saw, with clear unclouded eyes,
His more than better-half (at least in size);
He saw unveil'd—so long in mystery clothed—
The hapless form, that now once more he loathed.
At first in strange surprise he keenly stares,
And then in hideous terror wildly glares;
With trembling knees, cheeks pallid as the dead,
He gave one fearful cry, and then he fled.

And with the error, common to those stunn'd
In brain, he sought the house he should have shunn'd;
Or, pr'aps the house he should have sought; at least,
He soon was standing by the wedding-feast.
As he grew calm, he found that not alone
Was he permitted in that room to groan.
That near him sat a party, stout and ruddy,
The very counterpart of Mrs Moody.
He greeted Moody with an eye of search,
And said, "Sare, ees my wife koom back from church?"
"Your *wife*, sir!" M. replied, the notion dreading;
"I neither know nor care," he said, as burn'd
His anger quick; just then the guests return'd.
The gentle Mistress Moody, late De Ritter,
Went to her lord, amidst a general titter.
She sat beside him, wept, and would have knelt,
Could that have soothed the horror that he felt.
After a silence, lifted from the ground
Her redden'd eyes, and timid look'd around.
By chance she look'd towards the stout unknown,
Stared for a space, then fainted with a groan.
"Mein Gott!" the stranger cried, "she faint, my pet;
Mine frau—my wifes you say—mine Schatz Babette."

So true it was: the gentleman, good lack,
Was her first husband, suddenly come back ;
Who'd left some years before, his native glee-land,
To traffic with the natives of New Zealand.

With salts revived, the lady now can sit,
And meet him with affection, as 'twas fit.
“ Why you forget ? ” said he, grief-beaten.
The lady said—“ They wrote that you were eaten ;
Bade me not go, as 'twas beyond my pains,
By going there to honour your remains ;
Nor till months after you had been at rest,
Did I accept the offers long addrest.”
Then they embrace, and she some trouble takes,
To show her second marriage all mistakes.

But let us turn to Moody : in a trance
Some time he stood, then ended with a dance,
With mad fantastic steps that would adorn
The wild delights of landscape-laid Cremorne.
It took four men to hold him, and so make fast
His carcass in a chair to eat his breakfast.
Justice was done that meal, with satisfaction,
The same as if it meant a real transaction.

Magic Balm.



MAGIC BALM.

Now years went on with Moody, and the lines
That crept unwatch'd to stations 'neath his eyes
Mark'd ancient Time with all his old designs
To hide his coming, till o'erhead he flies
To come a stranger, when he claims his own,
Nor tell that youth is going—till he's flown.

This we believe a great design of life,
Although a shallow thinker calls it grief
To fight the fight 'twixt youth and middle life;
Although it must from pain be great relief
Not to perceive morn's cool delights are done
Until the fainting heats of noon begun.

It's quite amusing when a man discovers
He isn't quite the beau he was of yore;
Some time around the fact he weakly hovers,
At last he says, "It's true, but what a bore."
Perhaps he tells his nearest friends about it,
He's very shock'd to find—they never doubt it.

And so, with Moody, slowly gather'd round
The usual signs, and in their usual order:
That sweet fresh youth was slowly losing ground,
And being routed in complete disorder:

He was no longer young, and yet alive,
Unwon, unwed, and nearly thirty-five.

First went his brown and curling hair,
His broaden'd temples slowly getting bare ;
'Twas moving quite to hear him as he call'd,
On making the discovery,—“ I'm bald.”
Then went he wild for every kind of stuff
To keep the hair from falling, though enough
Still came away to put him out of humour,
And make a profit for the bland perfumer.
With zeal he read Erasmus Wilson's book,
Then to hard brushes and cold water took ;
Then to soft brushes, and the water warm,—
Which, if no good, at least could do no harm.
Then he found out a talented professor
In an old bankrupt, *cidevant* hairdresser,
Who rubb'd his scalp with something aromatic
That made it smart, and almost raised a blister ;
To soothe it, the professor, diplomatic,
Talk'd of his cures ;—meanwhile a bustling sister
Announced, from time to time, with careless stating,
That many noble persons were in waiting
To have their heads bedaub'd—(in such profusion
The waiting must be in great confusion)—
That Moody thought a thought that quite appall'd—
“ The whole nobility are growing bald.”
The learned man would say, “ A few more touches, ”
And then we've done—Maria, call the Duchess.”

Thus Moody was consol'd in this affair,
It seem'd to be *bon ton* to lose the hair.

Not long this homage fashion could he render,
His hair grew not, although his head grew tender.
The great professor swore things satisfactory :
In spite of all, his patient grew refractory.
No doubt, the system rais'd the latter's ire,
His head was now—just like a ball of fire ;
He car'd not whether all his locks should fall,
He wish'd his head off,—hair, scalp, and all.

But soon he tried one with a higher voucher,
So well described by Dickens as Miss Mowcher :
She bled his pocket with another notion,
Her source of income was a cooling lotion ;
She cool'd her client soon,—to her disaster
He found his gold went fast,—his hair went faster.
He tried one more professor—of him 'twas true
His system had not fail'd—for 'twas quite new.

This was a man who'd take the world in hand,
From sweeping crossings to a chief command :
Quick and clever, with the best intentions,
He ruin'd all his friends with new inventions ;
Not that the schemes themselves could be assailed,
For none were fairly tried—so none had fail'd,—
But that their companies—oh ! strange fatality—
Had never liv'd to work them in reality.
A board, directors, and a noble name,
Were plac'd before the public as a claim ;
Not, as some people said, “ as tricky snares :”
Some very worthy persons paid up shares.

Just when the thing was paying twelve per cent.,
The speculation to perdition went ;
Where the promoters should have,—though, 'twas known,
They'd only gone at present to Boulogne.
For the shareholders no one had a pity,
They're always being ruin'd in the city ;
The heart gets blunted when a thing's the fashion,
So the good public pour'd its bland compassion
On the crush'd man, who first unfurl'd the scheme,
Who'd lost, poor wretch, the profits of a dream.
He drank in all they gave, poor ruin'd brother,
Retired for a time, then dreamt another ;
Some said he was a rogue, and some an actor ;
Some said a martyr, some a benefactor ;
He was, at least, of use unto the nation,
By bringing on the cause of emigration :
For many widows' sons, all through his failures,
Had sought their fortunes in the Two Australias.
His public credit grew, so much he gain'd
(Somehow his private ditto rather wan'd),
That soon he manag'd from his brains to rake up
A scheme the government itself should take up.
The plan, I think, and could there be a fairer,
Was growing peaches on the Great Sahara ;
The government to find the right conditions,
By sending two exploring expeditions.
The plans were worth a nation—too extensive
For private enterprise,—besides expensive.
Would they succeed? some thoughtless booby cried ;
How could the world know that until they tried?
And as he drew them with unstinted measure, he
Found them well taken at the Treasury.

The next step was a meeting of his friends,
To train the public to the wish'd-for ends.
It was suggested they should all combine
To aid the project, each one in his line ;
The first, for instance (done the usual greetings),
Proposed his warehouse for the public meetings :
He might be damaged, e'en in that event
He ask'd no more than to be saved his rent.
Another could not part without his hinting
His house was far the best in town for printing.
A silversmith declar'd no ceremonial
Could grace the meetings, like a testimonial ;
His house, he said, in this case, would refrain
From working only with a view to gain.
And so the meeting parted, the projectors
Had offer'd *all* such aid, or were collectors.
Then came out pamphlets, maps, descriptions,
Though not so fast flowed in subscriptions.
The thing was quite a take, and yet 'twas funny
The public gave so little, that the money
Presented for the expeditions went
In paying for the plate, the printing, rent ;
Besides the cost of beating up " connection,"
They paid a large percentage for collection.
The project starv'd, what matter'd such a want ?
They always counted on a public grant ;
They would have had it, that without a doubt,
Had not their friends, the ministers, gone out.
For those succeeding shelv'd it in this diction—
It was a shameful fraud, a job, a fiction ;
And so the scheme, without the least intention,
Became a theme for faction and contention.

A thousand persons met to thank the founder,
And platform-speakers hail'd him forth a wonder ;
Twisted their party questions in their speeches ;
Proclaimed their principles—but forgot the peaches.

Then gave the testimonial (he elated
Had meant it for his "uncle,"—zounds ! 'twas plated).

Moody had met this schemer at the club,
And told him thoughtlessly his hairy trouble,
When suddenly the other said,—he'd rub
A stuff he knew, that makes the hair grow double.

He'd thoughts of turning farmer, but didn't care,
If, 'stead of grain, he took to growing hair.

The thought once flash'd—the energetic man
At once adopted his projected plan ;
That day he hired rooms,—a total floor ;
Then plac'd a brass announcement on the door.
Kept one mysterious chamber,—where, at ease,
He rubb'd your tresses, and receiv'd your fees.
Whate'er the stuff was that he dar'd to stick in,
'Tis true that Moody's locks began to thicken.

* * * * *

About this time, with London rather bor'd,
Leaving his hirsute honours unrestor'd,
Moody left town—nor long had been away,
Before the new professor, ev'ry day
Wrote 'til he answer'd (like his hasty ways)
With a short letter full of handsome praise.

Nor long it was before he felt annoy'd,
With the strange looks his dearest friends employ'd ;
Not glances of avoidance—for much nearer
And closer came they, often looking dearer.
The ladies oft would change the playful wile,
Into a glance above, and cover'd smile ;
When freshly introduc'd, it made him bitter
To see the party trying not to titter.
Good gracious! What's the matter? Why so flout him?
Was there then something risible about him ?
But still he saw, wherever now he went,
The mention of his name magnetic sent
A shock of laughter through the gather'd party,
Politely under kept—yet doubtless hearty.

Annoy'd to be a butt, and yet too proud
To ask the reason, or complain aloud,
He journey'd home, and soon rejoined his club,
Where some young grinner ask'd him to a " rub ;"
Whatever was the joke—it brought a burst
(And not indeed the last, although the first)
Of rolling laughter from the men assembled,
That peal'd until the chandeliers trembled.
Moody grew wroth,—his passions were on fire,
But still he knew 'twere better to retire.

One morn, when he was thoughtful searching after
The cause that made him such a theme for laughter,
A lady friend call'd in, one of the kind
That so much pleasure in tame gossip find.
After some talk,—she said, " I want to know :
Now tell me, Moody, does it make it grow ?"

"It grow! Grow what?" he answer'd, with an air
That seem'd half guessing something. "Why, the hair!"
"The *hair*!" he cried, his visage growing pale.
"The hair, of course," she said; "you cannot fail
To know that lately, almost everywhere,
Your name's connected with a stuff for hair.
Perhaps you don't,—I know you of those readers
Who only condescend to skim the leaders.
You scarce can touch a journal, but you'll find
That Mr Robinson speaks out his mind
Of this rare stuff;—and could you do it better?
The notices contain your very letter;
And all the world regards you—pray be calm—
A walking sample of the Magic Balm.
Look here, you see it—'Published by desire,
The note of Moody Robinson, Esquire.
This well-known and distinguish'd man of fashion,'"——

"Hold!" cried our hero, in a tow'ring passion;
"I'll ring the fellow's neck," and without adieu,
Like arrow from bow, down street he flew,
Nor did he, till he reach'd those chambers stop,—
The place had been converted to a shop!
A shop for Magic Balm,—and, horror! there,
A portrait of himself, with such a head of hair,
Profuse and wondrous, curling, stiff as bristle,
There too, in gilded frame, his own epistle.

He rush'd within—his former friend had flown,
Two months before, to sheltering Boulogne;
And, 'fore he went, to make his visit better,
He'd sold the business, balm, and Moody's letter.

The present owner claim'd to have a right
To keep the letter in the public sight;
Not that he acknowledgment refus'd,
That Moody's confidence had been abus'd;
But as a trader he'd been early taught it,
That everything was his'n when he'd bought it.

So Moody for the note was forc'd to pay,
Then vanish'd from the town for many a day.



Moody Settled.

MOODY SETTLED.

How oft it happens in this world of cost
The prize of life is hunted for and lost ;
But when the sicken'd heart gives up pursuit,
It tumbles in the lap like ripen'd fruit ;
Falls rich with bounty to the weary hand
That stretch'd in vain to gather or command.
The unreach'd grapes, perhaps too truly sour,
Have shed their sweetness for you at the hour
When failure, courage, patience, and employment
Have shaped you for *that*, ripen'd for enjoyment.
'Tis better thus, than pluck (as oft is seen)
With both the character and fortune green.

Yet man dissatisfied whom nought can sate,
Bitterly says the luck has come too late ;
That all he wish'd to please are cold or dead,
And e'en his powers of enjoyment fled ;
When little thought would tell him that for use
His powers are stronger, weaken'd for abuse.
The friends he deems he's lost by death or cares,
Would love not his success when rivalling theirs.
A newer generation, reverent taught,
Can give him praise without an envious thought .

To them his better fate is no disgrace,
But cause of pride, the honour of their race.
Yet many, though with passion fully quell'd,
Confessed the gift most tenderly withheld ;
The lofty spirit easy roused to pride,
But humbled by a host of cares that stride
Destructive o'er the verdant hopes of youth,
Confesses tardily the late-learnt truth,
That had an earlier fortune him been granted
Ill-nourish'd faults had chasten'd good supplanted.
And so those disappointed in the heart
By unrequited love, or forced to part
By sternest need from all they deeply love,
Believe no fates so cruel others move.

"Peace? oh, no peace! another holds my fere,
Lives in her heart, and makes her life his care."
Some suffering months pass by, yet patient years,
Efface the touches of those scalding tears ;
The passions disciplined to firmer bearing
Yield to a love less wild, but more endearing ;
And then the ardent heart, controll'd, confesses
The gift denied it spared a life's distresses,
That it's youth's love, too fanciful, too fond,
Had wither'd 'neath the grip of closer bond.

* * * * *

At last thus Moody's wife without his will,
Came like the extras to a builder's bill ;
That is as suddenly (without the strife),
Appear'd this extra to his scheme of life ;
Or as the fisher with his dainty flies
Whips all the day without a single rise
And leaving in despair the hope of prize,

Dropping his line, indiff'rent, careless, cool,
Lo! hooks the plumpest tenant of the pool.
So Moody, quitting tactics, flirting, snare,
Caught what he wish'd without a thought of care.

For in his matrimonial schemes defeated,
At length he deem'd his chances all completed ;
But planted single his remaining days,
He thought no more of women and their ways.
He deem'd them now that part of the creation
That only call'd for clever conversation.
Their favour could not cheer, or anger flout him,
He only sought to please the world about him.
Abundantly provided, nought he asks
Than to perform this gentlest of all tasks,
And take his jolly way o'er hill and plain,
Without a thought of recompense or gain.

Yet strange to say, although he's growing bald,
And though the hair remaining waxeth grey,
And by the young he is "old Moody " call'd,
And has indeed long seen his brightest day
(Even his teeth have lost their pearly white),
He's more than ever all his friend's delight.

Even the youngest girls are always glad
To have him tow'rds their guarded sides attracted,
Because their talk with him, however mad,
Brings up no fear of having hearts abstracted ;
With fathers, mothers, daughters, all or either,
The ancient Moody stands in highest feather.

His set agree he's much improved of late ;
His manners are more plain, and even crude ; he
Is sometimes blunt ; but then his thoughts create
More for his friends, and less by far for Moody.

No intercourse is grateful to the mind
Where civil things must be repaid in kind.
The constant thought of paying back must bore you,
Like eating dinner with the bill before you.
Who would love turtle, venison chops, or ice,
If in the spoon he always saw the price ?
And so those men we love not, whose urbanity
But asks a contribution to their vanity.
We know its worth, and know they'd take it ill
Should you neglect to cash their little bill ;
As girls who dress, to make the world admire,
Are always dowdies by the household fire,
So the vain puppy no good grace extends,
Unless he sees return where he expends.
Thus rough ungiving souls more loving meet
Than does the liberal softness of conceit ;
And Moody found, when homely-minded grown,
The natural-hearted claimed him for their own.

Amongst these latter was an Indian Colonel,
Who with a lady, daughter of his heart,
Appeared in parties daily or nocturnal,
Or else in pic-nics took a leading part ;
In fact, there was that " just-the-thing " about 'em,
No gathering of their set was " *ton* " without 'em.

Moody ne'er knew a more agreeable pair :
The gentleman experienced, full of story,
Fine in his figure, of a martial air,
He'd sought and won a soldier's fleeting glory ;
He cottoned to our friend (to use a phrase
Rich in the vulgar meaning of these days.)

The lady was a little past her prime,
Whatever *that* may be in female eyes.
It might be Indian suns, it might be time,
Had faintly changed the lines where beauty lies ;
And yet withal enough of that was there
To charm the eyes of those that love the fair.

And yet though time had slightly touch'd the face,
In kind amends he'd ripen'd up the heart ;
To the round form had added fuller grace,
And taught the soul to lighten ev'ry part ;
So, wanting beauty, brilliant or alarming,
She was most wholly and completely charming.

Between these people and our pleasant friend
Sprang up a friendship of the truest kind ;
Their intercourse seem'd fated ne'er to end,
And ran its rash career almost blind ;
The soldier told his tales of toil and war,
While he and Moody smoked the peace cigar.

But still there was a rather quaint reserve,
That kept our hero from that closest bond
Of the high confidence such friends deserve ;
Forsooth, he felt his heart was growing fond,

Too fond of that society ; and yet
His life seem'd sweeter for the colonel's pet.

Now Moody called to mind his past mishaps,
And swore to be most prudent in this case ;
At least not rest his hopes upon a " p'raps,"
But be quite certain ere he had the face
To offer up his heart, his hand, his cash ;
To watch and wait, and venture nothing rash.

But now the danger was, he thought in fact
That she approved his preference though concealing
That point from all save him, with woman's tact,
And yet to him (as he thought) love revealing.
So things went on. Oh ! must I tell the whole ?—
The cautious Moody gave her up his soul.

Now groans he sad, his cheeks grow thin and pale
In the fierce fight 'twixt funk and inclination ;
On silence firm resolved, yet hopes his tale
Is plainly told her in this alteration,
The more so as in her he sees a sign
That makes her in his eyes still more divine.

For now the lady fades, which only serves
To make poor Moody tend'rer in attentions,
Which while he pays them, wholly shake his nerves,
And call more fully out his soul's contentions ;
Her piercing looks shoot fire through his brain,
And seem to ask for sympathy in pain.

He thought she gather'd with reluctant pride
A comfort in his talk for her dejection ;
She stole more often to her father's side,
As if she loved to cherish his protection ;
Until poor Moody thought, no doubt upon it,
"She's quite unhappy now, and *I* have done it."

How could he doubt, no other favour'd swain
E'er came about the house, or sought her smiles ;
He'd tried to pump her o'er and o'er again,
Her heart was scatheless from another's wiles.
So now where purse, position, feelings suit all,
To keep her longer waiting, would be brutal.

Thus firm resolved—once more he'd try his fate,
And pop the question—desperate manœuvre ;
He dress'd himself in haste—he might be late,
Then found it was too early, hours over.
He waits, and thinks ;—time seems eternal,
A knock is at the door ; in walks the Colonel.

After some greetings (which on Moody's side
Were not for once towards his friend sincere),
Finding the father, when he sought a bride
Who came unconscious now to interfere.
Howe'er, the Colonel, looking sad and graver,
Explain'd he came to ask his friend a favour.

They sit and look grave English at each other.
The colonel said, " My dear friend, I think
You must have seen my daughter tries to smother
A silent grief that makes her spirit sink ;

In fact, her health is failing; now I ask you
To aid me to restore it; will it task you?

I won't pretend to paint you Moody's face

At hearing this request; perhaps you'll guess
Its lines had more of comedy than grace,

As he replied, "Of course, I'll aid you; yes."
"I knew you would," the Colonel said; "and now
I'll tell you all, before I tell you how.

"My daughter has a lover" ("Oh!" groans Moody)

"Who's fought a score of fights in Hindostan,"
(Our hero breathed a hope they all were bloody,)

"And now he comes to wed her, half-a-man;
That is to say, his legs, and eyes, and arms,
Are none the better for his wars' alarms.

"His health is shatter'd and my daughter fears

His voyage home may finish all the rest;"
("I hope it will," thinks Moody as he hears;
Oh, no! that's wrong, but 't might be for the best,")

"And now we wish, if everything avails,
To go and meet our soldier at Marseilles.

"You know," continued he, "when any two

After long years of absence meet again,
Any third person must become *de trop*.

We want a fourth—why need I more explain;
Will you be he?" Poor Moody, almost dumb,
Gasps out unconsciously, "I'll come! I'll come!"

The Colonel left him grateful and delighted,
While Moody sits, half stupified, alone,
Feeling as if all nature were benighted,
At this the latest blow, but heaviest one.
What a conclusion to his hopes and toil,
Only to be his very rival's foil !

At length they started on their road to France,
And lose no time in reaching *hot* Massillia ;
The lady, worse and worse, as they advance
Towards this port, and then is taken ill here,
So that her friends were forced to go without her
Down to the pier, to meet the " Bhurrumpouta."

Now Moody and friend
Their footsteps bend
To the custom-house level quay ;
To watch for the ship,
With that curl of the lip
With which knowing ones watch the sea.

At last she comes in,
As dark as sin,
And passes the Emp'ror's fleet.
Then the friend appears
Much older in years,
But his legs and arms complete.

His health may be broken,
But he's every token
That his life is yet in hey-day.

For on his arm,
To the Colonel's alarm,
 There hangs a fair young lady.

And she hangs in that way
That's as much as to say,
 He's mine, and I will not lose him.
That peculiar cling,
That's only the thing
 You know with the wife of your bosom.

Now what would you gain,
If we should explain
 Their meeting; we'll cut it shorter.
It was easy discerned
That the exile returned
 Had jilted the Colonel's daughter.

By the Colonel, well bred,
Very little is said,
 Though he scorns the whole transaction.
But stalking away,
He leaves Moody to say,
 He expects full satisfaction.

Then Moody's referred
To a man with a beard,
 Who belongs to some "Contingent,"
With cheeks as sallow
As palm-oil tallow,
 Or as wash'd by some astringent.

This officer bold
To Moody told
How things had come to pass ;
That is, how *the* expected
Had his first love rejected,
And taken another lass.

He said his friend could hardly well be blamed,
So many years had passed since they had met,
That time and warfare had his passion tamed,
That in his soldier's toils his love had set ;
When in this state he'd come across temptation,
In a young beauty of the Irish nation.

One of those girls who seek a tropic clime
Ready for marriage, outfitted with a *trousseau*,
Whose boundless hopes had not come right in time,
Yet frightened to go home unless they do so.
His friend had met this charmer on the steamer,
And fall'n a victim to the pretty schemer.

What could man do ? for almost to the last
He'd kept his honour for the first and other.
But honour flies when woman has you fast
On board a ship with nought but love and bother ;
And so she caught occasion when at Malta,
To lead her sea-prize to th' Hymeneal altar.

And now, of course, there nothing was but fighting,
To bring the matter to a happy issue :
The Colonel would not e'er forgive the slighting
His daughter's rights, without that mystic tissue

Of murderous politeness, called a meeting :
" So let us settle now, as time is fleeting."

The thing was soon arranged, the hostile pair
Would meet to satisfy the wound in honour,
By putting in one more or so elsewhere,
It mattering not who takes or is the donor.
'Twas lucky, too, concerning this transaction
That hit or miss, 'twas equal satisfaction.

That is to say, 'twas equal to the parties,
But to the lady—nothing of the kind ;
The men forgot how tortured now her heart is,
And then to wring it more was most unkind ;
Whichever fell, her father or her friend,
Her " satisfaction" equal in the end.

And Moody thought he showed his true devotion
In "seconding" her father to his grave.
Good luck !—the fair did not approve the notion,
And strange to say, she thought him bound to save
Her father from this peril, for the cruel
Tongue of fame had told her of the duel.

Sending for Moody, she in tears entreated
By all his friendship he would aid her now,
To have this terrible design defeated,
And save her sorrow from this second blow.
Moody in tears, as she more pressing grew,
Promised her all he knew he couldn't do.

He sought the tough old soldier, but alas!
Found all entreaty, every reason fail;
He was resolved the thing should come to pass,
Not e'en his daughter's grief should make him quail:
She had been grossly wronged, her hopes defeated;
No child of his should be so vilely treated.

"Her hopes defeated," Moody musing thought
Were they again erect, the father might
To something more agreeable soon be brought;
At anyrate persuaded not to fight.
He posted to the lady, full of dreams
Of love and hope, and rather cunning schemes.

His failure soon was told; gently he shows
(His speech with numerous topics interlarded)
Her father's chiefest thought 'midst anger's throes
Was taking her back home, as one discarded;
Nought could prevent his venturing his life,
But a fair chance of seeing her a wife.

The lady stared—indeed she rather winced—
But Moody stoutly pushed his crowning reason,
Until his hearer slowly was convinced,
A new engagement would not be a treason
To the lost love; he had her at command,
So boldly offer'd her his heart and hand.

No wonder (with some little hesitation),
The lady gave the honour Moody craved,
Her heart was full of bitter indignation—
Her father's life—her own repute was saved;

And as to Moody's self, she liked him rather,
And said she'd take him "to preserve her father."

And now no reason longer there remain'd

For any kind of warlike preparation;
If not forgiveness, peace at least was feign'd,

When grounds were not for asking reparation;
And thus at last (for nought this time miscarried),
The happy Moody settled was and married.

THE END.







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